MEDITATIONS

AND

CONTEMPLATIONS.

In TWO VOLUMES.

CONTAINING,

VOL. I.	VOL. II.
MEDITATIONS among the TOMBS; AND REFLECTIONS on a FLOWER GARDEN.	CONTEMPLATIONS on the NIGHT; AND CONTEMPLATIONS on the STARRY HEAVENS.

By JAMES HERVEY, A.B.
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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

TO

PAUL ORCHARD,

OF

STOKE-ABBEY, IN DEVONSHIRE, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

AS your honoured father was pleaſed to make choice of me, to anſwer in your name at the font, and to exerciſe a ſort of guardianſhip over your ſpiritual intereſts; permit me, by putting theſe little treatiſes into your hand, to fulfil ſome part of that ſolemn obligation.

GRATITUDE for many ſignal Favours, and a conſcientious regard to my ſacred engagements, have long ago inſpired my breaſt with the warmeſt wiſhes, both for your true dignity, and real happineſs. Nor can I think of a more endearing, or a more effectual way, of advancing either the one or the other, than to ſet before you a ſketch of your excellent father's character.—Illuſtrious examples are the moſt winning incitements to virtue; and none can come to attend with ſuch particular recommendations to you, as the pattern of that worthy perſon, from whom, under a gracious God, you derive your very being.

A MOST cordial and reverential eſteem for the divine word was one of his remarkable qualities. Thoſe oracles of heaven were his principal delight,

and his inſeparable companions. Your gardens, your ſolitary walks, and the hedges of your fields, can witneſs with what an unwearied aſſiduity he exerciſed himſelf in the law of the Lord. From hence he fetched his maxims of wiſdom, and formed his judgment of things. The ſacred precepts were the model of his manners, and the guide of his life; while the precious promiſes were the joy of his heart, and his portion for ever.

IMPROVING company was another of his moſt reliſhing pleaſures. Few gentlemen were better furniſhed, either with richneſs of fancy, or copiouſneſs of expreſſion, to bear a ſhining part in converſation. With theſe talents he always endeavoured to give ſome uſeful, and generally ſome religious, turn to the diſcourſe. Nor did he ever reflect, with greater complacency, on his ſocial hours, than when they tended to glorify the Eternal Majeſty, and to awaken in himſelf and others, a more lively ſpirit of devotion.

To project for the good of others, was his frequent ſtudy; and to carry thoſe benevolent contrivances into execution, his favourite employ. When viſited by the young perſons of the neighbourhood, far from taking an ungraceful pride to initiate them in debauchery, or confirm them in a riotous habit; it was his inceſſant aim, by finely adapted perſuaſives, to encourage them in induſtry, and eſtabliſh them in a courſe of ſobriety; to guard them againſt the allurements of vice, and animate them with the principles of piety. A noble kind of hoſpitality this! which will probably tranſmit its beneficial influence to their earthly poſſeſſions, to their future families, and even to their everlaſting ſtate.

A CONVICTION of human indigence, and a thorough perſuaſion of the divine All-ſufficiency, induced him to be frequent in prayer. To proſtrate himſelf, in profound adoration, before that infi-

nitely

nitely exalted being, who dwells in light inacceſſible, was his glory; to implore the continuance of the Almighty favour, and the increaſe of all chriſtian graces, was his gain. In thoſe moments, no doubt, he remembered you, ſir, with a particular earneſtneſs; and lodged many an ardent petition in the court of heaven, for his infant ſon. Ceaſe not to ſecond them with your own devout ſupplications, that they may deſcend upon your head, "in the "fulneſs of the bleſſings of the goſpel of peace."

To give their genuine luſtre to all his other endowments, he was careful to maintain an humble mind. Though his friends might admire his ſuperior abilities, or his acquaintance applaud his exemplary behaviour, he ſaw how far he fell ſhort of the mark of his high calling; ſaw, and lamented his defects: ſaw, and renounced himſelf; relying, for final acceptance, and endleſs felicity, on a better righteouſneſs than his own: even on the tranſcendently perfect righteouſneſs, and inconceivably precious death of Jeſus the Redeemer. This was the rock of his hope, and the very crown of his rejoicing.

THESE, ſir, are ſome of the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of your deceaſed parent. And, as you had the misfortune to loſe ſo valuable a relative, before you were capable of forming any acquaintance with his perſon, I flatter myſelf, you will the more attentively obſerve his picture, this his moral picture; deſigned, not to be ſet in gold, or ſparkle in enamel, but to breathe in your ſpirit, and to live in all your conduct.—Which, though it be intirely your own, calculated purely for yourſelf, may poſſibly (like the family pieces in your parlour, that glance an eye upon as many as enter the room) make ſome pleaſing and uſeful impreſſion on every beholder.—May every one, charmed with the beautiful image, catch its reſemblance; and each, in his reſpective ſphere, "go and do likewiſe!"

BUT

But you, ſir, are peculiarly concerned to copy the amiable original. As the order of an indulgent providence has made you heir of the affluent circumſtances; let not a gay and thoughtleſs inadvertence cut you off from the richer inheritance, of theſe noble qualifications.—Theſe will be your ſecurity, amidſt all the glittering dangers; which are inſeparable from blooming years, and elevated ſituation in life. Theſe are your path, your ſure and only path, to true greatneſs, and ſolid happineſs.—Tread in theſe ſteps, and you cannot fail of being the darling of your friends, and the favourite of heaven. Tread in theſe ſteps, and you will give inexpreſſible joy to one of the beſt of mothers; you will become an extenſive bleſſing to your fellow-creatures; and which, after ſuch moſt engaging motives, is ſcarce worthy to be mentioned, you will be the delight, the honour, and the boaſt of,

Dear Sir,

Your moſt affectionate Godfather,

And faithful Humble Servant,

Weſton Favell, near
Northampton,
July 14, 1747.

JAMES HERVEY.

PREFACE.

WE have already exerciſed our ſpeculations, on the Tombs and Flowers; ſurveying nature, covered with the deepeſt horrors, and arrayed in the richeſt beauties. Allegory taught many of the objects, to ſpeak the language of virtue; while imagination lent her colouring, to give the leſſons an engaging air.——And this, with a view of imitating that divine inſtructor; who commiſſioned the lily *, in her ſilver ſuit, to remonſtrate in the ear of unbelieving reaſon; who ſent his diſciples (men ordained to teach the univerſe) to learn maxims of the laſt importance, from the moſt inſignificant birds *, that wander through the paths of the air; from the very meaneſt herbs *, that are ſcattered over the face of the ground.

Imboldened

* * * Matt. vi. 26, 28, 29, 30.

† Celebrated writers, as Demoſthenes and Cicero, Thucydides and Livy, are obſerved to have a ſtyle peculiar to themſelves—Now, whoever conſiders the diſcourſes of Chriſt, will find a ſtyle by which he remarkably diſtinguiſhes himſelf, and which may properly be called HIS OWN. Majeſtic, yet familiar, happily uniting dignity with condeſcenſion; it conſiſts, in teaching his followers the ſublimeſt truths, by ſpiritualizing on the moſt common occurrences: which beſides its being level to the loweſt apprehenſions; and admirably adapted to ſteal into the moſt inattentive heart; is accompanied with this very ſingular advantage, that it turns even the ſphere of buſineſs into a ſchool of inſtruction; and renders the moſt ordinary objects a ſet of monitors, ever ſoliciting our regard, becauſe ever preſent to our ſenſes.—So that, I believe, it may be ſaid of this amiable method, in which our LORD conveyed; as well as of that powerful Energy, which attended his doctrines; that "never Man ſpake like this Man."—The harveſt approaching, He reminds his Diſciples of a far more important harveſt,

John

PREFACE.

Imboldened by the kind acceptance of the preceding ſketches, I beg leave to confide in the ſame benevolence of taſte, for the protection and ſupport of the two remaining eſſays; which exhibit a proſpect of ſtill life, and grand operation; which moralize on the moſt compoſed and moſt magnificent appearances of things.——In which fancy is again ſuffered to introduce her imagery; but only as the handmaid of truth: in order to dreſs her perſon, and diſplay her charms; to engage the attention, and win the love, even, of the gay, and of the faſhionable. Which is more likely to be effected, by forming agreeable pictures of nature, and deriving inſtructive obſervations; than by the laborious method of long-deduced arguments, or cloſe connected reaſonings.——The contemplation of the Heavens and the Earth, of their admirable properties, and beneficial changes has always afforded the moſt exalted gratification to the human mind. In compliance with this prevailing taſte, I have drawn my ſerious admonitions from the ſtupendous theatre, and variegated ſcenery, of the univerſe. That the reader may learn his duty, from his very pleaſure:—may gather wiſdom, mingled with virtue, from the moſt refined entertainments, and nobleſt delight.

The

John iv. 35. Matt. xiii. 39. when immortal beings ſhall be reaped from the grave, and gathered in from all the quarters of the earth; when every human creature ſhall ſuſtain the character of valuable wheat, of deſpicable tares; and accordingly be lodged in manſions of everlaſting ſecurity, or conſigned over to the rage of unquenchable fire—In his charge to Fiſhermen, when they are commencing preachers, Matt. iv. 19. He exhorts them conformably to the nature of their late occupation, to uſe the ſame aſſiduity and addreſs in winning ſouls, as they were wont to exerciſe in catching the finny prey. —But, for a further illuſtration of this no leſs uſeful than curious ſubject, I would refer my reader to a moſt valuable note, in Sir Iſaac Newton's Obſervations on the Prophecies: p. 148. 4to edition.

PREFACE.

The evening, drawing her ſables over the world, and gently darkening into night, is a ſeaſon peculiarly proper for ſedate conſideration. All circumſtances concur, to huſh our paſſions, and ſooth our cares; to tempt our ſteps abroad, and prompt our thoughts to ſerious reflection,

——— Then is the Time,
For thoſe, whom Wiſdom, and whom Nature charm,
To ſteal themſelves from the degen'rate Croud,
And ſoar above this little Scene of Things;
To tread low-thoughted Vice beneath their Feet;
To ſooth the throbbing Paſſions into Peace,
And woo lone Quiet in her ſilent Walks *.

The favour I would ſolicit for the firſt of the following compoſitions, is, that it may be permitted to attend, in ſuch retired and contemplative excurſions. To attend, if not under the character of a friend; at leaſt, in the humble capacity of a ſervant, or a page:—as a ſervant, to open the door of Meditation, and remove, every impediment to thoſe beſt exerciſes of the mind; which blend advantage with amuſement, and improve, while they delight:—as a page, to gather up the unſtable, fluctuating grain of fancy; and collect her fickle powers into a conſiſtent, regular, and uſeful habit of thinking.

The other, converſant among the ſtarry regions, would lead the imagination through thoſe beautiful tracts of unclouded azure; and point out to the judgment ſome of thoſe aſtoniſhing particulars, which ſo eminently ſignalize the celeſtial worlds. A proſpect this, to which curioſity attracts our eyes, and to which ſcripture itſelf often directs our ſtudy. A proſpect, of all others, moſt excellently calculated, to enlarge the ſoul, and ennoble its conceptions;——to give the higheſt apprehenſions of

* Thomſ. Autumn, l. 874, laſt edit. 12mo.

of the everlaſting GOD, and create ſentiments of becoming ſuperiority, with relation to all tranſitory intereſts;——in a word, to furniſh faith with the firmeſt foundation, for a ſteady affiance, and true magnanimity of ſpirit; to afford piety the ſtrongeſt motive, both for a lively gratitude, and profound veneration.

While Galilæo lifts his tube, and diſcovers the prodigious magnitude of thoſe radiant orbs;—— while Newton meaſures their amazing diſtances, and unites the whole ſyſtem, in harmonious order, by the ſubtle influences of attraction.—I would only like the herald before that illuſtrious Hebrew*, proclaim at every turn, "Bow the knee, and adore the "Almighty Maker; magnify his eternal name, and "make his praiſe, like all his works, to be glo-"rious."

* Gen. xii. 43.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

NIGHT.

Night is fair Virtue's *immemorial friend;*
The conſcious Moon through ev'ry diſtant age,
Has held a lamp to Wiſdom.

Night Thoughts, No. V.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

NIGHT.

THE buſineſs of the day diſpatched, and the ſultry heats abated, invited me to the recreation of a walk: a walk, in one of the fineſt receſſes of the country; and in one of the moſt pleaſant evenings, which the Summer-ſeaſon produced.

THE limes and elms, uniting their branches over my head, formed a verdant canopy, and caſt a moſt refreſhing ſhade. Under my feet lay a carpet of nature's velvet; graſs intermingled with moſs, and embroidered with flowers. Jeſſamines, in conjunction with woodbines, twined around the trees; diſplaying their artleſs beauties to the eye, and diffuſing their delicious ſweets through the air. On either ſide, the boughs, rounded into a ſet of regular arches, opened a view into the diſtant fields, and preſented me with a proſpect of the bending ſkies. The little birds, all joyous and grateful for the favours of the light, were paying their acknowledgments in the tribute of harmony, and ſoothing themſelves to reſt with ſongs. While a French horn, from a neighbouring ſeat, ſent its melodious accents, ſoftened by the length of their paſſage, to compleat the concert of the grove.

ROVING in this moſt agreeable manner, my thoughts were exerciſed on a ſubject, more delightful

ful than the ſeaſon, or the ſcene. I mean, our late ſignal victory, over the united forces of inteſtine treaſon and foreign invaſion. A victory, which pours joy through the preſent age, and will tranſmit its influence to generations yet unborn.—Are not all the bleſſings, which can endear ſociety or render life itſelf deſirable, centred in our preſent happy conſtitution, and auſpicious government? and were they not all ſtruck at, by that impious and horrid blow, meditated at Rome, levelled by France, and ſeconded by factious ſpirits at home? Who then can be ſufficiently thankful, for the gracious interpoſition of Providence? which has not only averted the impending ruin, but turned it, with aggravated confuſion, on the authors of our troubles?

METHINKS, every thing valuable, which I poſſeſs; every thing charming, which I behold; conſpire to enhance this ever-memorable event. To this it is owing, that I can ramble unmoleſted along the vale of private life, and taſte all the innocent ſatisfactions of a contemplative retirement.—Had rebellion * ſucceeded in her deteſtable deſigns; inſtead of walking with ſecurity and complacence in theſe flowery paths, I might have met the aſſaſſin with his dagger: or have been obliged to provide for my ſafety, by abandoning my habitation.——Farewel then, ye fragrant ſhades; ſeats of meditation, and calm repoſe! I ſhould have been driven from your loved retreats, to make way for ſome inſulting victor.—Farewel then, ye pleaſing toils, and wholeſome amuſements of my rural hours! I ſhould no more have reared the tender flower to the ſun; no more have taught the eſpalier to expand her boughs; nor have fetched, any longer, from my kitchen-garden, the pureſt ſupplies of health.

HAD

* Referring to the Rebellion, ſet on foot in the year 1745, ——which, for ſeveral months, made a very alarming Progreſs in the North——but was happily extinguiſhed by the glorious and deciſive victory at Culloden.

HAD rebellion ſucceeded in her deteſtable deſigns; inſtead of being regaled with the muſic of the woods, I might have been alarmed with the ſound of the trumpet, and all the thunder of war. Inſtead of being entertained with this beautiful landſcape, I might have beheld our houſes ranſacked, and our villages plundered; I might have beheld our fenced cities encompaſſed with armies, and our fruitful fields "cloathed with deſolation," or have been ſhocked with the ſtill more frightful images, of "Garments rolled in blood," and of a ruffian's blade reeking from a brother's heart. Inſtead of Peace, with her chearing olives, ſheltering our abodes; inſtead of Juſtice, with her impartial ſcale ſecuring our goods; Perſecution had brandiſhed her ſword, and Slavery clanked her chains.

NOR are theſe miſeries imaginary only, or the creatures of a groundleſs panic. There are in a neighbouring kingdom, who very lately experienced them in all their rigour *. And, if the malignant ſpirit of Popery had forced itſelf into our church; if an abjured Pretender had cut his way to our throne; we could have no reaſon to expect a mitigation of their ſeverity, on our behalf.—— But ſuppoſing the tender mercies of a bigotted uſurper, to have been ſomewhat leſs cruel; yet where, alas! would have been the encouragement, to cultivate our little portion; or what pleaſure could ariſe from an improved ſpot; if both the one and the other lay, every moment, at the mercy of lawleſs power? This imbittering circumſtance would ſpoil their reliſh; and by rendering them a precarious, would render them a joyleſs acquiſition.—In vain might the vine ſpread her purple cluſters; in vain, be laviſh of her generous juices; if tyranny, like a ravenous

* See a pamphlet intitled, An Hiſtorical Memorial of the moſt remarkable proceedings againſt the Proteſtants in France om the Year 1744 to 1751.

ravenous harpy, ſhould be always hovering over the bowl, and ready to ſnatch it from the lip of induſtry.

LIBERTY, that deareſt of names; and property, that beſt of charters; give an additional, an inexpreſſible charm, to every delightful object,——ſee, how the declining ſun has beautified the weſtern clouds; has arrayed them in crimſon, and ſkirted them with gold. Such a refinement of our domeſtic bliſs, is property; ſuch an improvement of our public privileges, is liberty.——When the lamp of day ſhall intirely withdraw his beams, there will ſtill remain the ſame collection of floating vapours; but O! how changed, how gloomy! The Carnation bluſhes no more; the golden edgings are gone; and all the lovely things are loſt, in a leaden-coloured louring ſadneſs. Such would be the aſpect, of all theſe ſcenes of beauty; all theſe abodes of pleaſure; if expoſed continually to the caprice of arbitrary ſway, or held in a ſtate of abject and cringing dependance.

THE light of heaven has almoſt finiſhed his daily race, and haſtens to the goal. He deſcends lower and lower; till his chariot-wheels ſeem to hover on the utmoſt verge of day. And, what is ſomewhat remarkable, his orb, upon the point of ſetting, grows broader: the ſhadows, juſt before they are loſt in undiſtinguiſhed darkneſs, are ſurpriſingly lengthened *.———Like bleſſings, little prized, while poſſeſſed: but highly eſteemed, the very inſtant they are preparing for their flight; bitterly regretted, when once they are gone, and to be ſeen no more.

THE radiant globe is, now, half-immerſed beneath the duſky earth. He is taking his leave of our hemiſphere, and gilds the plains with a languid luſtre.

* Majoreſque cadunt altis de Montibus Umbræ.

VIRG.

luſtre.——But could I view the ſea, at this juncture, it would yield a moſt amuſing and curious ſpectacle. The rays, ſtriking horizontally on the liquid element, give it the appearance of floating glaſs; or reflected in many a different direction, form a beautiful multiplicity of colours.——A ſtranger, as he walks along the ſandy beach; and loſt in penſive attention, liſtens to the murmurings of the reſtleſs flood, is agreeably alarmed by the gay decorations of the ſurface. With entertainment, and with wonder, he ſees the curling waves, here gliſtering with white, there glowing with purple; in one place, wearing an azure tincture; in another, glancing a caſt of undulating green; in the whole, exhibiting a piece of fluid ſcenery, that may vie with yonder penſil tapeſtries, though wrought in the loom, and tinged with the dyes of heaven.

But, while I am tranſported by fancy to the ſhores of the ocean, the great luminary is ſunk beneath the horizon, and totally diſappears. The whole face of the ground is overſpread with ſhades; or with, what one of the fineſt painters of nature calls, a dun obſcurity. Only a few very ſuperior eminences are tipt with ſtreaming ſilver. The tops of groves, and lofty towers, catch the laſt ſmiles of day *: are ſtill irradiated by the departing beams.—But oh! how tranſient is the diſtinction! how momentary the gift! Like all the bleſſings, which mortals enjoy below, it is gone, almoſt as ſoon as granted. See! how languiſhingly it trembles on the leafy ſpire; and glimmers, with a dying faintneſs, on the mountain's brow. The little vi-

* See this remarkable appearance delicately deſcribed, and wrought into a compariſon, which, in my Opinion, is one of the moſt juſt, beautiful, and noble pieces of imagery to be found in modern poetry.

Night-Thoughts, No. II. p. 42. 4to Edit.

vacity, that remains, decays every moment. It can no longer hold its ſtation. While I ſpeak, it expires; and reſigns the world to the gradual approaches of night.

——————Now twilight grey
Has in her ſober liv'ry all things clad †.

Every object, a little while ago, glared with light; but now, all appears under a more qualified luſtre. The animals harmonize with the inſenſible creation; and what was gay in thoſe, as well as glittering in this, gives place to an univerſal gravity. In the meadows, all was jocund and ſportive: but now the gameſome lambs are grown weary of their frolicks; and the tired ſhepherd has impoſed ſilence on his pipe. In the branches, all was ſprightlineſs and ſong: but now the lively green is wrapt in the deſcending glooms; and no tuneful airs are heard, but only the plaintive ſtock-dove, cooing mournfully through the grove.——Should I now be vain and trifling, the heavens and the earth would rebuke my unſeaſonable levity. Therefore, be theſe moments devoted to thoughts, ſedate, as the cloſing day; ſolemn, as the face of things. And, indeed, however my ſocial hours are enlivened with innocent pleaſantry; let every evening, in her ſable habit, toll the bell to ſerious conſideration. Nothing can be more proper, for a creature that borders upon eternity, and is haſting continually to his final audit, than daily to ſlip away from the circle of amuſements, and frequently to relinquiſh the hurry of buſineſs, in order to conſider and adjuſt the things that belong to his peace."

Since the ſun is departed, from whence can it proceed, that I am not involved in pitchy darkneſs? Whence, theſe remainders of diminiſhed brightneſs?

† Milt. Par. Loſt, B. iv. l. 598.

neſs? which, though ſcarcely forming a refulgence, yet ſmooth the rugged brow of night. I ſee not the ſhining orb, and yet am cheared with a portion of his ſoftened ſplendors.——Does he remember us, in his progreſs through other climes; and ſend a detachment of his rays, to eſcort us in our further motions; or cover (if I may uſe the military term) our retreat, from the ſcene of Action? Has he bequeathed us a dividend of his beams, ſufficient to render our circumſtances eaſy, and our ſituation agreeable? till ſleep pours its ſoft oppreſſion on the organs of ſenſe; till ſleep ſuſpends all the operations of our hands; and intirely ſuperſedes any more occaſion for the light.

No: it is ill judged and unreaſonable, to aſcribe this beneficent conduct to the ſun. Not unto him; not unto him: but unto his Almighty Maker we are obliged, for this noble preſent, this valuable legacy. The gracious Author of our being has ſo diſpoſed the collection of circumambient air, as to make it productive of this fine and beneficial effect. The ſun-beams, falling on the higher parts of the aerial fluid, inſtead of paſſing on in ſtrait lines, are bent inward, and infracted to our ſight. Their natural courſe is over-ruled, and they are bidden to wheel about; on purpoſe to favour us with a welcome and ſalutary viſit.——By which means, the bleſſing of Light and the ſeaſon of buſineſs are conſiderably prolonged. And, what is a very endearing circumſtance, prolonged moſt conſiderably; when the vehement heats of Summer incline the ſtudent to poſt-pone his walk, till the temperate evening prevails; when the important labours of the harveſt call the huſbandman abroad, before the day is fully riſen.

After all the ardors of the ſultry day, how reviving is this coolneſs!——This gives new verdure to the fading plants; new vivacity to the withering

flowers; and a more exquiſite fragrancy to their mingled ſcents.——By this, the air alſo receives a new force, and is qualified to exert itſelf with greater activity: to brace our limbs; to heave our lungs; and co-operate, with a briſker impulſe, in perpetuating the circulation of our blood.——This I might call the grand Alembic of nature; which diſtils her moſt ſovereign cordial, the refreſhing dews. Inceſſant heat would deſtroy the pearly drops; or oblige them to evaporate, in imperceptible exhalations. Turbulent winds, or even the gentler motions of Aurora's fan, would diſſipate the riſing vapours, and not ſuffer them to come to a coalition. But, favoured by the ſtillneſs, and condenſed by the coolneſs of the night, they form that finely-tempered humidity, which cheers the vegetable world, as ſleep exhilarates the animal.

Such are the advantages of ſolitude. The world is a troubled ocean; and who can erect ſtable purpoſes, on its fluctuating waves? The world is a ſchool of wrong: and who does not feel himſelf warping to its pernicious influence*? On this ſea of glaſs †, how inſenſibly we ſlide from our ſtedfaſtneſs! Some ſacred truth, which was ſtruck in lively characters on our ſouls, is obſcured, if not obliterated. Some noble reſolution, which heaven had wrought in our breaſts, is ſhaken, if not overthrown. Some inticing vanity, which we had ſolemnly renounced, again practiſed its charms, and again captivates our affections. How often has an unwary glance kindled a fever of irregular deſire in our hearts? How often has a word of applauſe dropt luſcious poiſon into our ears; or ſome diſreſpectful expreſſion raiſed a guſt of paſſion in our boſoms?

* Nunquam a turba mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid, ex eo quod compoſui, turbatur: aliquid, ex his quæ fugavi, redit. Inimica eſt multorum converſatio. Senec.

† Rev. xv. 2.

boſoms? Our innocence is of ſo tender a conſtitution, that it ſuffers in the promiſcuous croud; our purity, of ſo delicate a complexion, that it ſcarce touches on the world without contracting a ſtrain. We ſee, we hear, with peril.

But here ſafety dwells. Every meddling and intruſive avocation is ſecluded. Silence holds the door againſt the ſtrife of tongues, and all the impertinences of idle converſation. The buſy ſwarm of vain images, and cajoling temptations, that beſet us, with a buzzing importunity, amidſt the gaieties of life, are chaſed by theſe thickening ſhades.—Here I may, without diſturbance, commune with my own heart; and learn that beſt of ſciences, to know myſelf. Here the ſoul may rally her diſſipated powers, and grace recover its native energy. This is the opportunity, to rectify the corrupting examples. This is the place, where I may, with advantage, apply myſelf to ſubdue the rebel within; and be maſter, not of a ſceptre, but of myſelf.—Throng then, ye ambitious, the levees of the powerful; I will be punctual in my aſſignations with ſolitude. To a mind intent upon its own improvement, ſolitude has charms incomparably more engaging, than the entertainments preſented in the theatre; or the honours conferred in the drawing-room.

I said ſolitude—But am I then alone?——'Tis true, my acquaintance are at a diſtance. I have ſtole away from company, and am remote from all human obſervation.——But that is an alarming thought.

Millions of ſpiritual creatures walk the earth,
Unſeen, both when we wake and when we ſleep†.

Perhaps, there may be numbers of thoſe inviſible beings, patrolling the ſame retreat; and joining

† Milt. Par. Loſt, B. iv. l. 677.

ing with me in contemplating the Creator's work. Perhaps thoſe miniſtring ſpirits, who rejoice at the converſion of a ſinner, and hold up the goings of the righteous, may follow us to the lonely receſs; and, even in our moſt ſolitary moments, be our conſtant attendants.—What a pleaſing awe is awakened, by ſuch a reflection! How venerable it renders my retired walk! I am ſtruck with reverence, as under the roof of ſome ſacred edifice, or in the preſence-chamber of ſome mighty monarch. —O! may I never bring any pride of imagination, nor indulge the leaſt diſſolute affection; where ſuch refined and exalted intelligences exerciſe their watch!

'Tis poſſible, that I am encompaſſed with ſuch a cloud of witneſſes; but it is certain, that God, the infinite and eternal God, is ever with me. The great Jehovah, before whom all the angelic armies bow their heads, and veil their faces, ſurrounds me; ſupports me, pervades me. "In Him I live, "move, and have my being." The whole world is his auguſt temple; and, in the moſt ſequeſtered corner, I appear before his adorable majeſty, no leſs than when I worſhip in his houſe, or kneel at his altar. In every place, therefore, let me pay him the homage of a heart, cleanſed from idols, and devoted to his ſervice. In every circumſtance, let me feel no ambition, but to pleaſe him; nor covet any happineſs, but to enjoy him.

How ſublime is the deſcription, and how ſtriking the ſentiment, in that noble paſſage of the Pſalms, "Whether ſhall I go from thy Spirit, or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence?" If I climb up into the heights of heaven thou art there inthroned in light. If I go down to the depths of the grave, thou art there alſo in thy pavillion of darkneſs. If I retire to the remoteſt eaſtern climes, where the morning firſt takes wing: if, ſwifter than the darting ray, I paſs to the oppoſite regions of the weſt,

weſt, and remain in the uttermoſt parts of the ſea *: ſhall I, in that diſtant ſituation, be beyond thy reach: or, by this ſudden tranſition, eſcape thy notice? So far from it; that could I, with one glance of thought tranſport myſelf beyond all the bounds of creation; I ſhould ſtill be incircled with the immenſity of thy eſſence; or rather, ſtill be incloſed in the hollow of thy hand. Important and delightful truth! let it be interwoven with every thought! and become one with the very conſciouſneſs of my exiſtence! that I may continually walk with God, and conduct myſelf, in every ſtep of my behaviour, "as ſeeing Him that is inviſible."

THEY are the happy perſons; felicity, true felicity, is all their own; who live under an habitual ſenſe of God's omnipreſence, and a ſweet perſuaſion of his ſpecial love. If dangers threaten, their impregnable defence is at hand: nothing can be ſo near to terrify, as their Almighty Guardian to ſecure them.—To theſe the hours can never be tedious; and it is impoſſible, for them to be alone. Do they ſtep aſide from the occupations of animal life? A more exalted ſet of employments engage their attention. They addreſs themſelves, in all the various acts of devotion, to their heavenly Father; who now ſees in ſecret, and will hereafter reward them openly. They ſpread all their wants before his indulgent eye; and diſburden all their ſorrows, into his compaſſionate boſom.——Do they withdraw from human ſociety? They find themſelves under the more immediate regards of their Maker. If they reſign the ſatisfactions of ſocial intercourſe; it is to cultivate a correſpondence with the condeſcending Deity, and taſte

* Pſal. cxxxix. 7, 8, 9. There is, I think, an additional ſtrength and beauty in the thought; if, with the learned Mr. Mudge, we ſuppoſe an Antitheſis between the two clauſes of this laſt verſe, as there evidently is between thoſe of the preceding; and that they expreſs in a poetical ſtyle, the extremities of the Eaſt and the Weſt.

taſte the pleaſures of divine friendſhip.—What is ſuch a ſtate, but the very ſuburbs of heaven? What is ſuch a conduct, but an antepaſt of eternal bleſſedneſs?

Now, my ſoul, the day is ended. The hours are all fled: They are fled to the ſupreme Judge, and have given in their evidence. An evidence, regiſtered in heaven; and to be produced at the great audit.——Happy they! whoſe improvement has kept pace with the paſſing minutes. Who have ſeized them, as they advanced; and engaged them in the purſuits of wiſdom, or the ſervice of virtue.

How is the day gone, almoſt as ſoon as it dawned!——The ſilent moments ſlip away inſenſibly. No thief ſteals more unperceived from the pillaged houſe. Where-ever we are, however employed, Time purſues his inceſſant courſe. Though we are liſtleſs and dilatory; the great meaſurer of our days preſſes on; ſtill preſſes on, in his unwearied career; and whirls our weeks, and months, and years away.——Is it not then ſurpriſingly ſtrange, to hear people complain of the tedioufneſs of their time, and how heavy it hangs upon their hands? To ſee them contriving a variety of amuſing artifices, to accelerate its flight, and get rid of its burden?——Ah! thoughtleſs mortals! Why need you urge the headlong torrent! Your days are ſwifter than a poſt; which, carrying diſpatches of the laſt importance, with unremitted ſpeed ſcours the road. They paſs away like the nimble ſhips; which have the wind in their wings, and ſkim along the watry plain. They haſten to their deſtined period, with the rapidity of an eagle; which leaves the ſtormy blaſt behind her, while ſhe cleaves the air, and darts upon her prey. * And

* Job ix. 25, 26. By theſe three very expreſſive Images, the inſpired Poet repreſents the unintermitted and rapid flight of time. The paſſage is illuſtrated with great judgment, and equal delicacy, in Dr. Grey's moſt ingenious abridgment of Schultens—

And now it is gone, how ſhort it appears! When my fond eye beheld it in perſpective, it ſeemed a very conſiderable ſpace. Minutes, crouded upon minutes, and hours, ranged behind hours, exhibited an extenſive plain, and flattered me with a long progreſſion of pleaſures. But upon a retroſpective view, how wonderfully is the ſcene altered! The landſcape, large and ſpacious, which a warm fancy drew, brought to the teſt of cool experience, ſhrinks into a ſpan. Juſt as the ſhores vaniſh, and mountains dwindle to a ſpot; when the ſailor, ſurrounded by ſkies and ocean, throws his laſt look on his native land.——How clearly do I now diſcover the cheat! May it never impoſe, upon my unwary imagination again! I find, there is nothing abiding on this ſide eternity. A long duration, in a ſtate of finite exiſtence, is mere illuſion.

Perhaps, the healthy, and the gay, may not readily credit the ſerious truth; eſpecially from a young pen, and new to its employ. Let us then refer ourſelves to the deciſion of the ancient. Aſk ſome venerable old perſon, that is juſt marching off the mortal ſtage; how many have been the days of the years of thy life *? It was a monarch's queſtion; and therefore can want no recommendation, to the faſhionable world.—Obſerve how he ſhakes his hoary locks, and from a deep-felt conviction replies; "Fourſcore years have finiſhed their rounds, "to furrow theſe cheeks, and clothe this head in "ſnow. Such a term may ſeem long and large, to "inconſiderate youth. But oh! how ſhort, how "ſcanty, to one that has made the experiment!

"Short,

Schultens—Quæ tribus in elementis velociſſima, hic admirabili cum emphaſi congeruntur. In terris, nil pernicius curſore, & quidem læti quid ferente. Rapidius tamen adhuc undas, non ſecant, ſed ſupervolant, navigiol a papyro contexta. Omnium rapidiſſime aërem grandibus alis permetitur aquila, præcipiti lapſu ruens in prædam.

* Gen. xlvii. 8.

" Short, as a gleam of tranſient ſunſhine; ſcanty, " as the ſhadow that departeth. Methinks, it was " but yeſterday, that I exchanged my childiſh ſports, " for manly exerciſes; and now, I am reſigning " them both, for the ſleep of death. As ſoon as " we are born, we begin to draw to our end; and " how ſmall is the interval, between the cradle and " the tomb!"—O! may we believe this teſtimony of mature age! May every evening bring it, with clearer evidence, to our minds! And may we form ſuch an eſtimate of the little pittance, while it is upon the advancing hand; as we ſhall certainly make, when the ſands are all run down!

Let me add one reflection on the work to be done, while this ſhuttle is flying through the loom †. A work of no ſmall difficulty, and yet of the utmoſt conſequence.—Haſt thou not ſeen, haſt thou not heard of, the excellent of the earth; who were living images of their Maker? His divine likeneſs was tranſuſed into their hearts, and beamed forth in all their conduct. Beamed forth in the meekneſs of wiſdom, and purity of affection; in all the tender offices of love, and all the noble efforts of zeal. To be ſtampt with the ſame beautiful ſignature, and to be followers of them, as they were of Christ? this, this is thy buſineſs. On the accompliſhment of this, thy eternal all depends. And will an affair of ſuch unſpeakable weight admit of a moment's delay, or conſiſt with the leaſt remiſſneſs?—Eſpecially, ſince much of thy appointed time is already elapſed; and the remainder is all uncertainty, ſave only that it is in the very act to fly.—Or ſuppoſe, thou hadſt made a covenant with the grave, and waſt aſſured of reaching the age of Methuſelah; how ſoon would even ſuch a leaſe expire! —Extend it, if you pleaſe, ſtill farther, and let it be co-exiſtent with nature itſelf:

† My days are ſwifter than a Weaver's Shuttle. Job vii. 6.

ſelf: yet, how ſpeedily will the conſummation of all things commence! For, yet a very little while, and the commiſſioned archangel lifts up his hand to heaven, and ſwears by the Almighty name, that time ſhall be no longer *. Then, abuſed opportunities,

* This alludes to the beginning of Revelations the xth; which, abſtracted from its ſpiritual meaning, and conſidered only as a ſtately Piece of Machinery, well deſerves our attention; and, I will venture to ſay has not its Superior, perhaps not its Equal, in any of the moſt celebrated maſters of Greece and Rome. All that is gloomy or beautiful in the atmoſphere, all that is ſtriking or magnificent in every element, is taken in to heighten the idea. Yet nothing is diſproportionate; but an uniform air of ineffable Majeſty greatens, exalts, ennobles the whole.——Be pleaſed to obſerve the aſpect of this auguſt Perſonage. All the brightneſs of the Sun ſhines in his Countenance: and all the rage of the Fire burns in his Feet.——See his Apparel. The clouds compoſe his Robe, and the drapery of the Sky floats upon his Shoulders. The Rainbow forms his Diadem, and that which "compaſſeth the Heaven with a "glorious Circle," is the ornament of his Head——Behold his Attitude. One foot ſtands on the ocean, and the other reſts on the land. The wide extended earth, and the world of waters, ſerve as pedeſtals for thoſe mighty columns.—— Conſider the Action, His Hand is lifted up to the height of the Stars. He ſpeaks; and the Regions of the Firmament echo with the mighty Accents, as the mid-night Deſart reſounds with the Lion's Roar. The artillery of the ſkies is diſcharged at the ſignal; a peal of ſeven-fold thunder ſpreads alarm; and prepares the world to receive his orders.—To finiſh all; and give the higheſt grandeur, as well as the utmoſt ſolemnity, to the repreſentation; hear the decree that iſſues from his mouth: 'He ſwears by Him that liveth for ever and ever.' In whatever manner, ſo majeſtic a perſon had expreſſed himſelf; He could not fail of commanding univerſal attention. But, when He confirms his ſpeech, by a moſt ſacred and inviolable oath; we are not only wrapt in ſilent ſuſpenſe, but overwhelmed with the profoundeſt awe——He ſwears 'That time ſhall be no longer.' Was ever voice, ſo full of terror; ſo big with wonder? It proclaims, not the fall of empires, but the final period of things. It ſtrikes off the wheels of nature; bids ages and generations ceaſe to roll; and, with one potent word, conſigns a whole world over to diſſolution. —This

nities, will never return; and new opportunities, will never more be offered. Then, ſhould negligent mortals wiſh, ever ſo paſſionately, for a few hours; —a few moments only;—to be thrown back from the opening eternity; thouſands of worlds would not be able to procure the grant.

SHALL I, now, be induſtrious to ſhorten, what is no longer than a ſpan; or to quicken the pace of what is ever on the wing? Shall I ſquander away what is unutterably important, while it laſts; and when once departed, is altogether irrevocable? O! my ſoul forbear the folly, forbear the deſperate extravagance: Wilt thou chide as a loiterer, the arrow that boundeth from the ſtring; or ſweep away diamonds, as the refuſe of thy houſe?—Throw time away! Aſtoniſhing, ruinous, irreparable profuſeneſs! throw empires away, and be blameleſs—But O! be parſimonious of thy days; huſband thy precious hours. They go connected, indiſſolubly connected, with heaven or hell *. Improved, they are a ſure pledge of everlaſting glory; waſted, they are a ſad perface to never-ending confuſion and anguiſh.

WHAT a profound ſilence has compoſed the world; ſo profound is the ſilence, that my very breath ſeems a noiſe: the ticking of my watch is

—This is one, among a multitude of very ſublime and maſterly ſtrokes, to be found in that too much neglected book—the BIBLE.

* I remember to have ſeen, upon a ſun-dial in a Phyſician's garden at Northampton, the following INSCRIPTION; which, I think, is the moſt proper motto for the inſtrument, that meaſures our time; and the moſt ſtriking admonition, which can poſſibly be given to every eye that glances upon it; —ab hoc Momento pendet Eternitas.—The weighty ſenſe of which, I know not how to expreſs in Engliſh, more happily than in thoſe words of Dr. Watts,

Good God! on what a ſlender Thread
(Or, on what a Moment of Time)
Hang everlaſting Things!

is distinctly heard: if I do but stir, it creates a disturbance. There is, now, none of that confused Din, from that tumultuous city: no voice of jovial rustics, from the neighbouring meadow: no chirping melody, from the shady thicket.—Every lip is sealed; not the least whisper invades the air; nor the least motion, rustles among the boughs. Echo herself sleeps unmolested. The expanded ear, though all attention, catches no sound, but, the liquid lapse of a murmuring stream.

"All things are hush'd, as nature's self lay dead."

If, in the midst of this deep and universal composure, ten thousand bellowing thunders should burst over my head, and rend the skies, with their united vollies: O! how should I bear so unexpected a shock? It would stun my senses, and confound my thoughts. I should shudder in every limb; and, perhaps, sink to the earth with terror.——Consider then, O mortals! consider, what a much more prodigious and amazing call will, ere long, alarm your sleeping bones. When the tenants of the tomb have slumbered, in the most undisturbed repose for a multitude of ages; what an inconceivable consternation must the shout of the archangel, and the trump of God, occasion! Will it not wound the ear of the ungodly; and affright, even to distraction, the impenitent sinner? The stupendous peal will sound through the vast of heaven; will shake the foundations of nature; and pierce even the deepest recesses of the grave. And how ——O! how will the prisoners of divine justice be able to endure that tremendous summons, to a more tremendous tribunal?——Do thou, my soul, listen to the still voice of the gospel. Attend, in this thy day, to the gracious invitations of thy Saviour. Then, shall that great midnight cry lose its horror,

horror, and be muſic to thy ears. It ſhall be welcome to thy reviving clay, as the tidings of liberty, to the dungeon captive; as the year of jubilee, to the haraſſed ſlave. This, this ſhall be its charming import, "awake, and ſing, ye that dwell in "duſt *."

WHAT a general ceſſation of affairs has this duſky hour introduced! A little while ago, all was hurry, hurry. Life and activity exerted themſelves, in a thouſand buſy forms. The city ſwarmed, with paſſing and repaſſing multitudes. All the country was ſweat and duſt. The air floated in perpetual agitation, by the flitting birds, and humming bees. Art ſat prying with her piercing eyes; while induſtry plied her reſtleſs hands;—but ſee; how all this fervent, and impetuous buſtle is fled with the ſetting ſun. The beaſts are ſlunk to their graſſy couch; and the winged people are retired, to their downy neſts. The hammer has reſigned its ſounding taſk, and the file ceaſes to repeat its flying touches. Shut, is the well-frequented ſhop, and its threſhold no longer worn by the feet of numerous cuſtomers. The village ſwain lies drowned in ſlumbers; and even his truſty dog, who, for a conſiderable time, ſtood centry at his door, is extended at his eaſe, and ſnores with his maſter.——In every place, toil reclines her head, and application folds her arms. All intereſts ſeem to be forgot; all purſuits are ſuſpended: all employment is ſunk away; ſunk away, like the fluttering myriads, that lately ſported in the ſun's departing rays. 'Tis like the ſabbath of univerſal nature; or as though the pulſe of life ſtood ſtill.

THUS will it be, with our infinitely momentous concerns; when once the ſhadows of the evening, that long evening which follows the footſteps of death,

* Iſa. xxvi 19.

death, are ſtretched over us. The dead cannot ſeek unto GOD; the living, the living alone, are poſſeſſed of this ineſtimable opportunity *. "There "is no work or device, no repentance or amend-"ment in the grave †, whither we are all haſting." When once that cloſing ſcene is advanced, we ſhall have no other part to act on this earthly theatre. Then, the ſluggard, who has ſlumbered away life in a criminal inactivity, muſt lie down in hopeleſs diſtreſs, and everlaſting ſorrow. Then, that awful doom will take place, "he that is holy let "him be holy ſtill; and he that is filthy, let him be "filthy for ever."

Is it ſo, my ſoul? Is this the only, only time allotted, for obtaining the great reward, and making thy

* ——Nunc, nunc properandus, & acri
Fingendus ſine fine rota. PERS.
Behold! now is the accepted Time. Behold! now is the day of Salvation. 2 Cor. vi. 2.

† They, who are gone down to the grave, are repreſented (Iſai. xxxviii. 11.) by the phraſe, הרל ישבי——rendered by "Vitringa, thoſe that inhabit the land of Intermiſſion or Ceſ-"ſation."—Which prevents all appearance of Tautology in the ſentence; and is, I think, a valuable improvement of the tranſaction: as it conveys an idea, not only diſtinct from the preceding, but of a very poetical and very afflicting nature; ſuch as was perfectly natural for the royal ſinger, and royal ſufferer, to dwell upon, in his deſponding moments.——Thus interpreted, the ſenſe will run; "I ſhall ſee Man no more: "I ſhall be cut off from the chearful ways of men, and all "the ſweets of human ſociety. And, what is a farther aggra-"vation of the threatened ſtroke, I ſhall, by its taking place, "be numbered with thoſe, that inhabit the land of intire ceſ-"ſation and inactivity: Where there will be no more poſſibi-"lity, of contributing to the happineſs of my kingdom; no "more opportunity, of advancing my Creator's Glory, or "of making my own final ſalvation ſure."———A ſentiment like this is grand, and important; full of piety, and full of benevolence; removes all ſuſpicion of unbecoming Puſillanimity, and does the higheſt honour to the monarch's character.

thy ſalvation ſure? And art thou lulled in a vain ſecurity; or dreaming on, in a ſupine inadvertency? Start, O! ſtart from thy trance, gird up the loins of thy mind, and work while it is day. Improve the preſent ſeed time, that eternity may yield a joyful harveſt.—We eſpecially, who are watchmen in Iſrael, and miniſters of the glorious goſpel; may we be awakened, by this conſideration, to all aſſiduity in our holy office. Some or other of our people are ever and anon departing into the inviſible ſtate; all our friends are making inceſſant approaches to their long home; and we ourſelves ſhall very ſhortly be tranſmitted to the confinement of the tomb. This is the favourable juncture, wherein alone we can contribute to their endleſs welfare. This is the criſis, the all important criſis of their final felicity. Inſtantly, therefore, let us pour in our wholeſome inſtructions; inſtantly, let us ply them with our earneſt exhortations. A moment's delay may be an irreparable loſs; may be irretrievable ruin. While we procraſtinate, a fatal ſtroke may intervene; and place us, beyond the power of adminiſtring; or place them beyond all poſſibility of receiving, any ſpiritual good. *

How frequently is the face of nature changed! and by changing made more agreeable!——The long-continued glitter of the day renders the ſoothing ſhades of the evening doubly welcome. Nor does the morn ever purple the eaſt with ſo pleaſing a luſtre, as after the ſullen gloom of a dark and black night.——At preſent a calm of tranquillity, and

* The caſe repreſented by the Prophet (1 Kings xx. 40.) ſeems perfectly applicable on this occaſion. "As thy ſervant "was buſy here and there, He was gone." So, while we are either remiſs in our function, or laying ourſelves out upon inferior cares, the people of our charge may be gone:—gone beyond the influence of our counſels; beyond the reach of our prayers:—gone into the unchangeable and eternal ſtate.

and undiſturbed repoſe, is ſpread through the univerſe. The weary winds have forgot to blow.—The gentle gales have fanned themſelves aſleep. Nothing ſtirs. Not ſo much as a ſingle leaf nods. Even the quivering aſpin reſts. And not one breath curls o'er the ſtream.—Sometimes, the tempeſt ſummons all the forces of the air; and pours itſelf with reſiſtleſs fury, from the angry north. The whole atmoſphere is toſſed into tumultuous confuſion, and the watery world is heaved to the clouds. The aſtoniſhed mariner, and his ſtraining veſſel, now ſcale the rolling mountain, and hang dreadfully viſible on the broken ſurge: now ſhoot with headlong impetuoſity, into the yawning gulph, and neither hulk, nor maſt, is ſeen. The ſtorm ſweeps over the continent; raves along the city ſtreets; ſtruggles through the foreſt-boughs; and terrifies the ſavage nations with a howl, more wildly horrid than their own. The knotty oaks bend before the blaſt; their iron trunks groan; and their ſtubborn limbs are daſhed to the ground. The lofty dome rocks; and even the ſolid tower totters on its baſis.

Such variations are kindly contrived, with an evident condeſcenſion to the fickleneſs of our taſte. Becauſe, a perpetual ſimilarity of objects would create a cold diſguſt; therefore, the indulgent father of our race has diverſified the univerſal ſcene, and bid every appearance bring with it the charm of novelty.——But this circumſtance is as beneficial, as it is entertaining. Providence, ever gracious to mortals; ever intent upon promoting our felicity; has taken care to mingle, in the conſtitution of things, what is pleaſing to our imagination, with what is ſerviceable to our intereſts. The piercing winds, and rugged aſpect of winter, render the balmy gales, and flowery ſcenes of Spring, peculiarly delightful. At the ſame time, the keen froſts mellow the ſoil, and prepare it for the hand of

induſtry. The ruſhing rains impregnate the glebe, and fit it for a magazine of plenty. The earth is a great laboratory; and December's cold collects the groſs materials, which are ſublimated by the refining warmth of May. The air is a pure elaſtic fluid; and was it always to remain in this motionleſs ſerenity, it would loſe much of its active ſpring; was it never agitated by thoſe wholeſome concuſſions, it would contract a noiſome, perhaps a peſtilential taint. Inſtead of purifying, it would corrupt the vital juices; and, inſtead of inhaling refreſhment, our reſpiration might be a ſource of diſeaſes; or every gaſp we draw, might be death *. ——How then ſhould we admire! oh! how ſhould we adore, that happy union of benignity and wiſdom; which from a variety of diſpenſations, produces an uniformity of good; a perpetual ſucceſſion of delights, an uninterrupted ſeries of advantages.

The darkneſs is now at its height; and I cannot but admire the obliging manner of its taking place. It comes not with a blunt and abrupt incivility, but makes gentle and reſpectful advances. A precipitate tranſition, from the ſplendors of day to all the

* Conſidering the immenſe quantity of coals, and other combuſtible materials, that are daily conſumed and evaporate into the air.—Conſidering the numberleſs ſteams, and clouds of ſmoke, that almoſt continually overwhelm populous cities—the noiſome exhalations, that ariſe from thronged Infirmaries and loathſome Jails; from ſtagnating lakes, and putrid fens;—the variety of offenſive and unwholeſome effluvia, that proceed from other cauſes;—it is a very remarkable inſtance of a Providence, at once tenderly kind, and infinitely powerful, that Mankind is not ſuffocated with Stench; that the Air is not choaked with Filth.——The air is the common ſewer, into which ten thouſand times ten thouſand nuiſances are inceſſantly diſcharged; and yet is preſerved ſo thoroughly clear, as to afford the moſt tranſparent medium for viſion; ſo delicately undulatory as to tranſmit, with all imaginable Diſtinctneſs, every diverſity of ſound; ſo perfectly pure as to be the conſtant reſiner of the fluids, in every animal that breathes.

the horrors of midnight, would be both inconvenient and frightful. It would bewilder the traveller in his journey; it would ſtrike the creation with amazement; and, perhaps, be pernicious to the organs of ſight. Therefore, the gloom ruſhes not upon us inſtantaneouſly, but increaſes by ſlow degrees; and, ſending twilight before as its harbinger, decently adverti ſes us of its approach. By this means, we are neither alarmed, nor incommoded, by the change; but are able to take all ſuitable and timely meaſures, for its reception.—Thus graciouſly has Providence regulated, not only the grand viciſſitudes of the ſeaſons, but alſo the common interchanges of light and darkneſs, with an apparent reference to our comfort.

Now the fierce inhabitants of the foreſt forſake their dens. A thouſand grim forms, a thouſand growling monſters, pace the deſart. Death is in their jaws, while ſtung with hunger, and a thirſt for blood, they roam their nightly rounds.——O! unfortunate traveller, overtaken by the night, in thoſe diſmal wilds! How muſt he ſtand aghaſt, at the mingled yell of ravenous throats, and lions roaring after their prey! Defend him, propitious heaven! or elſe he muſt ſee his endearing ſpouſe, and hail his native home, no more!——Now, the prowling wolf, like a murderous ruffian, dogs the ſhepherd's footſteps, and beſets his bleating charge. The Fox, like a crafty felon, ſteals to the thatched cottage, and carries off the feathered booty.

HAPPY for the world, were theſe the only deſtroyers that walk in darkneſs. But, alas! there are ſavages in human ſhape; who muffled in ſhades, infeſt the abodes of civilized life. The ſons of violence make choice of this ſeaſon †, to perpe-

† ——————When Night
Darkens the Streets, then wander forth the Sons
Of Belial, flown with inſolence and wine. MILT.

trate the moſt outrageous acts of wrong and robbery. The adulterer waiteth for the twilight; and, baſer than the villain on the highway, betrays the honour of his boſom-friend. Now, faction forms her cloſe cabals, and whiſpers her traiterous inſinuations. Now, rebellion plans her accurſed plots, and prepares the train to blow a nation into ruin. Now crimes, that hide their odious heads in the day, haunt the ſeats of ſociety, and ſtalk through the gloom with audacious front. Now the vermin of the ſtews crawl from their lurking holes, to wallow in ſin, and feed on the venom of the night. Each ſoothing himſelf with the fond notion, that all is ſafe; that no eye ſees.

And are they then concealed? Prepoſterous madmen! To draw the curtain between their infamous practices, and a little ſet of mortals; but lay them open to all theſe chaſte and wakeful eyes of heaven ‡.——Are they then concealed? No, truly; were theſe vigilant luminaries cloſed; an eye keener than the lightning's flaſh, brighter than ten thouſand Suns, beholds their every motion. Their thickeſt ſhades are beaming day §, to the jealous inſpector, and ſupreme Judge of human actions.—— Deluded creatures! have ye not heard, have ye not read, "That clouds and darkneſs are his majeſtic "reſidence ‖"? In that very gloom, to which you fly for covert, he erects his throne. What you reckon your ſcreen, is the bar of his tribunal.

O! remember

‡ ——'Sed Luna videt, ſed Sidera Teſtes
Intendunt Oculos'.

§ This is finely, and forcibly, expreſſed by the Pſalmiſt: "If I ſay peradventure the darkneſs ſhall cover me, then ſhall "my night be turned to day:" Or as it may be rendered ſomewhat more emphatically; "Even the night ſhall be "broad day-light all around me." Pſal. cxxxix. 10.

‖ Pſal. xcvii. 2.

O! remember this: ſtand in awe, and ſin not. Remember, that the great and terrible God is about your path §, when you take your midnight range; is about your bed, when you indulge the looſe deſire; and ſpies out all your ways be they ever ſo ſecretly conducted, or artfully diſguiſed.

Some minutes ago a paſſenger croſſed along the road. His horſe's foot ſtruck the ground, and fetched fire from a flint. My eye, tho' at a diſtance, catched the view; and ſaw, with great clearneſs, the bright ſparkles: Of which, had I been ever ſo near, I ſhould not have diſcerned the leaſt glimpſe, under the blaze of day.—So †, when ſickneſs has drawn a veil over the gaiety of our hearts: when misfortunes have eclipſed the ſplendor of our outward circumſtances; how many important convictions preſent themſelves, with the brighteſt evidence! Under the ſun-ſhine of proſperity, they lay undiſcovered; but, when ſome intervening cloud has darkened the ſcene, they emerge out of their

§ The original words are much ſtronger than the tranſlation. זרית and הסבנחה ſignify thou ſifteſt my path; and art familiarly or intimately, acquainted with all my ways. The former, I apprehend, denoting the exact cognizance, which the Almighty taketh; the latter implying the conſtant inſpection, which he exerciſeth, over all the circumſtances of our conduct. Pſal. cxxxix. 2.

† I beg leave to inform the young gentleman, whoſe name dignifies my dedication; that this was a remark of his honoured Father, when we rode together, and converſed in a duſky evening. I mention this circumſtance, partly, to ſecure the paragraph from contempt; partly, to give Him, and the world, an idea of that eminently ſerious taſte, which diſtinguiſhed my deceaſed friend.——The leſs obvious the reflections, the more clearly it diſcovers a turn of mind remarkably ſpiritual; which would ſuffer nothing to eſcape, without yielding ſome religious improvement: and the meaner the incident, the more admirable was the fertility of imagination, which could deduce the nobleſt truths from the moſt trivial occurrences.

their obſcurity, and even glitter upon our minds. Then the world, that deluſive cheat, confeſſes her emptineſs: but Jeſus, the bright and morning-ſtar, beams forth with inimitable luſtre. Then vice loſes all her fallacious allurements; that painted ſtrumpet is horrible, as the hags of hell: but virtue, deſpiſed virtue, gains lovelineſs from a louring providence, and treads the ſhades with more than mortal charm.—May this reconcile me, and all the ſons of ſorrow, to our appointed ſhare of ſuffering. If tribulation tend to diſſipate the inward darkneſs, and pour heavenly day upon our minds; welcome diſtreſs, welcome diſappointment; welcome whatever our froward fleſh, or peeviſh paſſions, would miſcal calamities. Theſe light afflictions, which are but for a moment, ſhall ſit eaſy upon our ſpirits: ſince they befriend our knowledge; promote our faith; and ſo, "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. §"

How has this darkneſs ſnatched every ſplendid and graceful object from my ſight! It has daſhed the ſponge over the picture of Spring, and deſtroyed all the delicate diſtinctions of things. Where are now the fine tinges, that ſo lately charmed me from the glowing Parterre? The bluſh is ſtruck out from the

§ Cor. iv. 17. The great Stephens, that oracle of Græcian learning, tranſlates our Apoſtle's Phraſe καθ' ὑπερβολην, Quo nihil majus dici aut fingi poteſt. But how does the ſenſe riſe! How is the idea inlarged, under two ſuch forcible expreſſions! —The whole verſe is a maſter-piece of the beautiful Antitheſis, the lively Deſcription, and the nervous Diction. It is one of thoſe noble paſſages in the inſpired writings, which like ſome rich aromatic plants, cannot be tranſferred from their own generous and native ſoil without being impaired in their vivacity, and loſing much of their delicacy. Perhaps the following verſion may be ſomewhat leſs injurious to the ſacred Original, than the common tranſlation;—"Our very light affliction, which is but juſt for the preſent moment, worketh out a far more exceeding and incomparably great, and eternal Weight of Glory."

the cheeks of the roſe; and the ſnowy hue is dropt from the lily. I caſt my eyes towards a magnificent ſeat; but the aſpiring columns, and fair expanded front, are mingled in rude confuſion. Without the ſun, all the elegance of the blooming world is a mere blank; all the ſymmetry of architecture, a ſhapeleſs heap.

Is not this an expreſſive-emblem of the lovelineſs, which the Sun of Righteouſneſs transfuſes into all that is amiable? Was it not for JESUS, and his merits, I ſhould ſigh with anguiſh of ſpirit; even while I rove through ranks of the moſt beautiful flowers, or breathe amidſt a wilderneſs of ſweets. Was is it not for JESUS, and his merits, I ſhould roam, like ſome diſconſolate Spectre, even through the ſmiles of creation, and the careſſes of fortune. My converſation in this world, though dreſſed in the moſt engaging forms of external pleaſure, would be like the paſſage of a condemned malefactor, through enamelled meadows, and bowers of bliſs, to be broke upon the wheel, or tortured to death on the rack. But a daily reflection, on the Lamb's atoning blood; a comfortable truſt, that my ſoul is reconciled through this glorious expiation; this is the Ray, the golden Ray, that irradiates the face of the univerſe. This is the Oil of Beauty; which makes all things wear a chearful aſpect; and the Oil of Gladneſs, which diſpoſes the ſpectator to behold them with delight *. This, this, is the ſecret charm, that teaches nature, in all her operations, ſo exquiſitely to pleaſe.

"Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, till the evening." But then his ſtrength fails; his

* Thus applied, that fine piece of Flattery, addreſſed to the Heathen emperor, is ſtrictly and literally true.

——Vultus ubi tuus
Affulſit populo, gratior it dies,
Et ſoles melius nitent. HORAT.

Which

his ſpirits flag! and he ſtands in need, not only of ſome Reſpite from Toil, but of ſome kindly and ſovereign Refreſhments.——What an admirable proviſion for this purpoſe is Sleep! Sleep introduces a moſt welcome vacation, both for the ſoul and body. The exerciſes of the brain, and the labours of the hands, are at once diſcontinued. So that the weary Limbs repair their exhauſted vigour; while the penſive Thoughts drop their load of ſorrows, and the buſy ones reſt from the fatigue of intenſe application. ——Moſt reviving cordial! Equally beneficial to our animal and intellectual powers. It ſupplies the fleſhly Machine, and keeps all its nice movements in a proper poſture for eaſy play. It animates the thinking Faculties with freſh alacrity, and rekindles their ardor for the ſtudies of the dawn. Without theſe enlivening recruits, how ſoon would the moſt robuſt conſtitution be waſted into a walking Skeleton; and the moſt learned ſage degenerate into a hoary Idiot!—Some time ago, I beheld, with ſurprize, poor Florio. His air was wild; his countenance meagre; his thoughts roving, and ſpeech diſconcerted. Inquiring the cauſe of this ſtrange alteration, I was informed, That, for ſeveral nights, he had not cloſed his eyes in ſleep. For want of which noble Reſtorative, that ſprightly youth, who was once the life of the diſcourſe, and the darling of the company;

Which I would caſt in a Chriſtian mould, and thus tranſlate:

When faith preſents the Saviour's death,
And whiſpers, "This is thine;"
Sweetly my riſing hours advance,
And peacefully decline.

While ſuch my views, the radiant ſun
Sheds a more ſprightly ray:
Each object ſmiles; all nature charms;
I ſing my cares away.

company; is become a ſpectacle of miſery and horror.

How many of my fellow-creatures, are, at this very inſtant, confined to the Bed of Languiſhing; and complaining, with that illuſtrious ſufferer of old, Weariſome Nights are appointed to me! * Inſtead of indulging ſoft repoſe, they are counting the tedious hours; telling every ſtriking clock; or meaſuring the very moments, by their throbbing pulſe. How many, harraſſed with Pain, moſt paſſionately long to obtain ſome little truce from their agonies, in peaceful ſlumbers! How many, ſick with Diſquietude, and reſtleſs even on their downy pillows, would purchaſe this tranſient oblivion of their woes, almoſt at any rate!——That, which wealth cannot procure; which multitudes ſigh for in vain; thy God has beſtowed on thee times out of number. The welcome Viſitant, punctual at the needed hour, has entered thy chamber, and poured his poppies round thy couch; has gently cloſed thy eye-lids, and ſhed his ſlumberous Dews over all thy ſenſes.

Since ſleep is ſo abſolutely neceſſary; ſo ineſtimably valuable; obſerve, what a fine Apparatus Almighty Goodneſs has made, to accommodate us with the balmy Bleſſing. With how kind a precaution, He removes whatever might obſtruct its acceſs, or impede its influence. He draws around us the Curtain of Darkneſs; which inclines us to a drowſy indolence, and conceals every object, that might too ſtrongly agitate the ſenſe. He conveys Peace into our Apartments; and impoſes ſilence, on the whole creation. Every animal is bidden to tread ſoftly, or rather to ceaſe from its Motions, when man is retiring to his repoſe.———May we not diſcern, in this gracious diſpoſition of things, the

* Job vii. 3.

the tender Cares of a Nurſing-mother; who huſhes every noiſe, and ſecludes every diſturbance, when ſhe has laid the child of her love to reſt? So, by ſuch ſoothing circumſtances, and gently-working Opiates, HE giveth to his Beloved, Sleep *.

ANOTHER ſignal inſtance of providence intent upon our welfare is, that we are preſerved ſafe in the hours of Slumber. How are we then loſt to all apprehenſion of danger; even though the murderer be at our bed-ſide, or his naked ſword at our breaſt! Deſtitute of all concern for ourſelves, we are unable to think of, much more, to provide for, our own ſecurity. At theſe moments, therefore, we lie open to innumerable perils: perils, from the reſiſtleſs rage of Flames: perils, from the inſidious artifices of Thieves, or the outrageous violence of Robbers; without either vigilance to obſerve the foe, or ſtrength to reſiſt the aſſault; perils, from the irregular Workings † of our own thoughts, and eſpecially

* Pſalm. cxxvii. 2.

† I think, it is reaſonable only to a ſuperintending and watchful Providence, that We are not hurried, when our imagination is heated, and our reaſon ſtupified by dreams, into the moſt pernicious actions.——We have ſometimes heard of unfortunate perſons, who, walking in their ſleep, have thrown themſelves headlong from a window, and been daſhed to death on the pebbles. And whence is it, that ſuch diſaſtrous accidents are only related as pieces of news, not experienced by ourſelves, or our families? Were our minds more ſober in their operations, or more circumſpect in their regard? No, verily; Nothing could be more wild, than their excurſions; none more inattentive to their own welfare. Therefore, if we have laid Us down, and ſlept in peace; it was, becauſe the LORD vouchſafed Us the ſweet refreſhment: if We roſe again in ſafety; it was, becauſe the LORD ſuſtained Us with his unremitted protection.

Will the candid reader excuſe me, if I add a ſhort ſtory, or rather a Matter of Fact, which I know to be true?—Two perſons, that had been hunting together in the day, ſlept together the following night. One of them was renewing the purſuit

eſpecially from the incurſions of our ſpiritual enemy. What dreadful miſchief might that reſtleſs, that implacable Adverſary of Mankind work, were there not an inviſible hand to controul his rage, and protect poor mortals! What ſcenes of horror might he repreſent to our imaginations, and, "ſcare us with dreams, or terrify us with viſions*." But the Keeper of Iſrael, who never ſlumbers, nor ſleeps, interpoſes in our behalf; at once to cheriſh us under his wings, and to defend us with a ſhield. It is ſaid of Solomon, "That threeſcore valiant men were "about his bed; all expert in war; every one "with his ſword upon his thigh, becauſe of fear "in the night †." But one greater than Solomon; one mightier than myriads of armed hoſts; even the great JEHOVAH, in whom is everlaſting ſtrength; He vouchſafes to watch over our ſleeping minutes, and to ſtop all the avenues of ill.——Oh! the unwearied and condeſcending Goodneſs of our Creator! Who lulls us to our reſt, by bringing on the ſilent ſhades;

purſuit in his dream; and having run the whole circle of the chaſe, came, at laſt, to the fall of the Stag. Upon this, he cries out with a determined ardor; 'I'll kill him: I'll kill him:' and immediately feels for the knife, which he carried in his pocket. His companion happening to be awake, and obſerving what paſſed, leaped from the bed; and, being ſecure from danger, ſtood (for the moon ſhined in the room) to view the event. When, to his inexpreſſible ſurprize, the infatuated ſportſman gave ſeveral deadly ſtabs in the very place, where, a moment before, the throat and the life of his friend lay.—This I mention, as a proof, that nothing hinders Us, even from being Aſſaſſins of others; or Murderers of Ourſelves, amidſt the mad fallies of ſleep; only the preventing Care of our heavenly Father.

* What a complete maſter that malignant ſpirit is in exhibiting viſionary repreſentations, appears from his conduct towards CHRIST, on the high mountain; and that he is too ready, if not reſtrained by an over-ruling Power, to employ his dexterity in afflicting Mankind, is evident from his treatment of Job. See Luke iv. 5. Job vii. 14.

† Cant. ii. 7, 8.

ſhades; and plants his own ever-watchful eye as our Centinel, while we enjoy the needful repoſe.

REASON, now, reſigns her ſedate office; and Fancy, extravagant Fancy, leads the mind through a Maze of Vanity. The head is crouded with falſe images, and tantalized with the moſt ridiculous miſapprehenſion of things. Some are expatiating amidſt Fairy Fields, and gathering garlands of viſionary Bliſs; while their bodies are ſtretched on a wiſp of ſtraw, and ſheltered by the cobwebs of a Barn. Others, quite inſenſible of their rooms of ſtate, are mourning in a doleful Dungeon, or ſtruggling with the raging billows. Perhaps, with haſty ſteps, they climb the craggy cliff; and, with real anxiety, fly from the imaginary danger. Or elſe, benumbed with ſudden fear, and finding themſelves unable to eſcape, they give up at once their hopes and their efforts; and, though reclined on a couch of Ivory, are ſinking, all helpleſs and diſtreſſed, in the furious Whirlpool. So unaccountable are the Vagaries of the Brain, while ſleep maintains its dominon over the limbs!

But is this the only ſeaſon, when abſurd and incoherent irregularities play their magic on our minds? Are there not thoſe who dream, even in their waking moments?——Some pride themſelves in a notion of ſuperior Excellency, becauſe the royal favour has annexed a few ſplendid titles to their names; or becauſe the dying Silk-worm has bequeathed her fineſt threads, to cover their nakedneſs.——Others congratulate their own ſignal Happineſs, becauſe the loads of golden Lumber are amaſſed together in their Coffers; or promiſe themſelves a moſt ſuperlative felicity indeed, when ſome thouſands more are added to the uſeleſs heap.—Nor are there wanting others, who gape after ſubſtantial ſatisfaction from airy applauſe; and flatter themſelves with, I know not what, immortality in the

momentary

momentary buz of renown. Are any of theſe a whit more reaſonable in their Opinions, than the poor ragged wretch in his Reveries; who, while ſnoring under a hedge, exults in the poſſeſſion of his ſtately palace, and ſumptuous furniture?—If perſons, who are very Vaſſals to their own domineering paſſions, and led captive by numberleſs temptations: if theſe perſons pique themſelves with a conceit of their Liberty, and fancy themſelves the generous and gallant Spirits of the age: where is the difference between theirs, and the Madman's Phrenzy; who, though chained to the floor, is throned in thought, and wielding an imaginary ſceptre? ——In a word; as many as borrow their dignity from a plume of feathers, or the gaudy trappings of fortune; as many as ſend their ſouls to ſeek for bliſs in the blandiſhments of ſenſe, or in any thing ſhort of the divine favour, and a well grounded hope of the incorruptible inheritance *; what are they, but dreamers with their eyes open; delirious though in Health?

Would you ſee their Picture drawn to the very Life; and the ſucceſs of their Schemes, calculated with the utmoſt Exactneſs; caſt your eye upon that fine repreſentation, exhibited by the Prophet: "It "ſhall be even as when a hungry Man dreameth, "and behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and "his Soul is empty: Or as when a thirſty Man "dreameth, and behold, he drinketh; but he awak-"eth, and behold he is faint, and his Soul hath Ap-"petite †." Such is the Race, and ſuch the Prize, of all thoſe Candidates for Honour and Joy; who run wide of the mark of the high calling of God, in

* Theſe give a ſacred, and home felt delight,
A ſober Certainty of waking bliſs.
Milt. Comus.

† Iſa. xxix. 8.

in CHRIST JESUS. They live in vanity, and die in woe.——Awaken us, merciful LORD, from theſe moon-tide Trances! Awaken us while conviction may turn to our advantage, and not ſerve only to increaſe our torment. O! let our "eyes "be enlightened, to diſcern the things that are "excellent;" and no longer be impoſed upon by fantaſtic appearances, which, however pompous they may ſeem, will prove more empty than the viſions of the night, more tranſient than the dream that is forgotten.

HAVING mentioned Sleep and dreams, let me once again conſider thoſe remarkable incidents of our frame: ſo very remarkable, that I may venture to call them a kind of experimental Myſtery, and little leſs than a ſtanding Miracle.——Behold the moſt vigorous Conſtitution, when ſtretched on the bed of eaſe, and totally reſigned to the ſlumbers of the night. Its activity is oppreſſed with fetters of indolence; its ſtrength is conſigned over to a temporary annihilation; the Nerves are like a Bow unſtrung, and the whole animal ſyſtem like a motionleſs Log.——Behold a perſon of the moſt delicate Senſations, and amiable Diſpoſitions. His eyes, though thrown wide open, admit not the viſual rays; at leaſt, diſtinguiſh not objects. His ears, with the organs unimpaired, and articulate accents beating upon the drum, perceive not the ſound; at leaſt, apprehend not the meaning. The ſenſes and their exquiſitely fine feelings are overwhelmed with an unaccountable ſtupefaction. You call him a ſocial creature; but where are his ſocial affections? He knows not the father that begat him; and takes no notice of the friend, that is his own ſoul. The wife of his boſom may expire by his ſide, and he lie unconcerned as a Barbarian. The children of his body may be tortured with the ſevereſt pangs; and He, even in the ſame chamber, remain untouched

touched with the leaſt commiſeration.——Behold the moſt ingenious Scholar; whoſe judgment is piercing, and able to trace the moſt intricate difficulties of ſcience; his taſte refined, and quick to reliſh all the beauties of ſentiment and compoſition. Yet at this juncture, the thinking faculties are unhinged, and the intellectual oeconomy quite diſconcerted. Inſtead of cloſe connected reaſonings, nothing but a disjoined huddle of abſurd ideas; inſtead of well-digeſted principles, nothing but a diſorderly jumble of crude conceptions. The moſt palpable deluſions impoſe upon his imagination. The whole night paſſes, and he frequently miſtakes it for a ſingle minute: is not ſenſible of the tranſition, hardly ſenſible of any duration.

Yet, no ſooner does the morning draw back his curtain, and day-light fill the room; but he awakes, and finds himſelf poſſeſſed of all the valuable endowments: which, for ſeveral hours, were ſuſpended, or loſt. He feels his ſinews braced, and fit for action: his ſenſes are alert and keen. The frozen affections melt with tenderneſs: the romantic viſionary brightens into the maſter of reaſon. And, what is beyond meaſure ſurpriſing, the intoxicated mind works itſelf ſober, not by ſlow degrees; but in the twinkling of an eye recovers from its perturbation. —Why does not the numbneſs, that ſeizes the animal powers, continue; and chain the limbs, in a perpetual liſtleſs inability? Why does not the ſtupor, that deadens all the nice operations of the ſenſes, hold faſt its poſſeſſion? When the thoughts are once diſ-adjuſted, why are they not always in confuſion? How is it, that they are rallied in a moment; and, from the wildeſt irregularity, reduced to the moſt orderly array?—From an inactivity, reſembling death; and from extravagancies, little differing from madneſs; how is the body ſo ſuddenly reſtored, to vigour and agility? How is the underſtanding

underſtanding inſtantaneouſly re-eſtabliſhed, in ſedateneſs and harmony?—Surely, "this is the Lord's "doing, and it ſhould be marvellous in our eyes:" ſhould awaken our gratitude, and inſpire our praiſe.

THIS is the time, in which ghoſts are ſuppoſed to make their appearance. Now the timorous imagination teems with phantoms, and creates numberleſs terrors to itſelf. Now, dreary forms, in ſullen ſtate, ſtalk along the gloom; or, ſwifter than lightning, glide acroſs the ſhades. Now, voices more than mortal * are heard from the echoing vaults, and groans iſſue from the hollow tombs. Now, melancholy ſpectres viſit the ruins of antient monaſteries, and frequent the ſolitary dwellings of the dead. They paſs and repaſs, in unſubſtantial images, along the forſaken galleries; or take their determined ſtand, over ſome lamented grave.—How often has the ſchool-boy fetched a long circuit, and trudged many a needleſs ſtep, in order to avoid the haunted church-yard? Or, if neceſſity has obliged him to croſs the ſpot; where human ſkulls are lodged below, and the baleful yews ſhed ſupernumerary horrors above; a thouſand hideous ſtories ruſh into his memory; fear adds wings to his feet; he ſcarce touches the ground; dares not once look behind him; and bleſſes his good fortune, if no frightful ſound purred at his heels, if no ghaſtly ſhape bolted upon his ſight †.

'TIS ſtrange, to obſerve the exceſſive timidity, that poſſeſſes many people's minds, on this fanciful occaſion; while they are void of all concern, on others of the moſt tremendous Import. Thoſe, who are ſtartled, in any dark and lonely walk, at the

* Vox quoque per lucos vulgo exaudita ſilentes
Ingens, et ſimulacra modis pallentia miris,
Viſa ſub obſcurum noctis. VIRG.

† See that valuable poem, ſtiled, THE GRAVE.

the very apprehenſion of a ſingle ſpectre, are nevertheleſs unimpreſſed at the ſure proſpect of entering into a whole world of diſembodied beings: Nay, are without any emotions of awe, though they know themſelves to be haſting into the preſence of the great, infinite, and eternal Spirit.—Should ſome pale meſſenger from the regions of the dead draw back our curtains at the hour of midnight; and, appointing ſome particular place, ſay, as the horrid apparition to Brutus, *I'll meet thee there* ‡: I believe, the boldeſt heart would feel ſomething like a panic; would ſeriouſly think upon the adventure, and be in pain for the event. But, when a voice from heaven cries, in the awakening language of the prophet, "Prepare to meet thy GOD, O Iſrael †;" how little is the warning regarded! How ſoon is it forgot! Prepoſterous ſtupidity! To be utterly unconcerned, where it is the trueſt wiſdom to take the alarm; and to be all trepidation, where there is nothing really terrible.—Do thou, my ſoul, remember thy Saviour's admonition; "I will forewarn you, whom you ſhall fear. Fear not theſe imaginary horrors of the night: but fear that awful Being; whoſe revelation of himſelf, though with expreſſions of peculiar mercy, made Moſes, his favourite ſervant, tremble exceedingly: whoſe manifeſtation, with purpoſes of inexorable vengeance, will make mighty Conquerors, that were familiar with dangers and eſtranged to diſmay, call upon the mountains to fall on them, and the rocks to cover them: The menace of whoſe majeſtic eye when he comes attended with thouſand thouſands of his immortal hoſts, will make the very heavens cleave

‡ The ſtory of Brutus, and his evil Genius, is well known. Nor muſt it be denied that the preciſe words of the ſpectre to the Hero were, 'I'll meet thee at Philippi.' But as this would not anſwer my purpoſe, I was obliged to make an alteration in the circumſtance of place.

† Amos iv. 12.

aſunder, and the world flee away,—O! dread his Diſpleaſure; ſecure his Favour; and then thou may'ſt commit all thy other anxieties to the wind; Thou may'ſt laugh at every other fear."

THIS brings to my mind a memorable and amazing occurrence, recorded in the book of Job ‡: which is, I think, no inconſiderable proof of the real Exiſtence of apparitions *, on ſome very extraordinary Emergencies; while it diſcountenances thoſe legions of idle tales, which ſuperſtition has raiſed, and credulity received. Since it teaches us, that if, at any time, thoſe viſitants from the unknown world, render themſelves perceivable by mortals, it is not upon any errand of frivolous conſequence; but, to convey Intelligences of the utmoſt moment, or to work impreſſions of the higheſt advantage.

'TWAS

‡ Job. iv. 12, 14, &c.

* Proof of the real exiſtence of apparitions.——If the ſenſe, in which I have always underſtood this paſſage be true—Eliphaz, I apprehend, was neither in a trance, nor in a dream, but perfectly awake.—Though he ſpeaks of ſleep; he ſpeaks of it, as fallen not upon himſelf but upon other men. He does not mention dreams, though חלומות *Somnia*, would have ſuited the verſe (if the book be in metre) altogether as well as חזיונות *Viſiones*.——It could not, I think, be a *Wind*, as ſome tranſlate the word רוח. Becauſe, the circumſtance of ſtanding ſtill, is not ſo compatible with the nature of a wind; and a wind would have paſſed above him; all around him, as well as before him; not to add, how low a remark it is, and how unworthy of a place in ſo auguſt a deſcription, that he could not diſcern the form of a wind.——It ſeems, therefore, to have been a real ſpirit, either angelical as were thoſe, which preſented themſelves to Abraham reſting at the door of his tent, and to Lot ſitting in the gate of Sodom; or elſe, the ſpirit of ſome departed ſaint, as in the caſe of Samuel's apparition, or the famous appearance of Moſes and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration.——A ſpirit, aſſuming ſome vehicle, in order to become viſible to the human eye. Which accordingly Eliphaz ſaw, exhibiting itſelf as an object of ſight. But ſaw, ſo obſcurely, and indiſtinctly, as not to be able, either to deſcribe its aſpect, or to diſcern whom it reſembled.

'Twas in the Dead of Night. All nature lay ſhrouded in darkneſs. Every creature was buried in ſleep. The moſt profound ſilence reigned through the univerſe. In theſe ſolemn moments, Eliphaz alone, all wakeful and ſolitary, was muſing upon ſublime and heavenly ſubjects.——When, lo! an awful being, from the inviſible realm, burſt into his apartment *. "A ſpirit paſſed before his face." Aſtoniſhment ſeized the beholder. His bones ſhivered within him; his fleſh trembled all over him; and the hair of his head ſtood erect with horror.—Sudden, and unexpected, was the Appearance of the phantom; but not ſuch its Departure. It ſtood ſtill, to preſent itſelf more fully to his view. It made a ſolemn pauſe, to prepare his mind for ſome momentous meſſage.———After which a Voice was heard; a voice, for the importance of its meaning, worthy to be had in everlaſting remembrance; for the ſolemnity of its delivery, enough to alarm a heart of ſtone. It ſpoke; and this was the purport of its words;———"Shall man, frail and wretched man, be juſt before the mighty God? Shall even the moſt upright and accompliſhed of mortals be pure in the ſight of his Maker †? Behold, and conſider it attentively. He put no ſuch

* I have given this ſolemn Picture a modern dreſs, rather for the ſake of variety and illuſtration, than from any apprehenſion of improving the admirable original. Such an attempt, I am ſenſible, would be more abſurd, than to lacquer gold, or paint the diamond. The deſcription, in Eliphaz's own language, is awful and affecting to the laſt degree. A Night-Piece, dreſſed in all the circumſtances of the deepeſt horror. I queſtion, whether Shakeſpear himſelf, though ſo peculiarly happy for his great command of terrifying images, has any thing ſuperior or comparable to this: The judges of fine compoſition ſee the maſterly ſtrokes; and, I believe, the moſt ordinary reader feels them, chilling his blood, and awakening emotions of dread in his mind.

† There ſeems to be a ſignificant and beautiful gradation in the Hebrew words אנוש and גבר, which I have endeavoured to preſerve, by a ſort of paraphraſtic verſion.—The reader will

truſt in his moſt exalted ſervants, as ſhould beſpeak them altogether incapable of defect, or authorize them to arrogate any honours to themſelves. And his very angels, without the leaſt injury to their character, He charged with Folly; as ſinking, even in the higheſt perfection of their holineſs, infinitely beneath his tranſcendent glories; as falling, even in all the fidelity of their obedience, inexpreſſibly ſhort of the homage due to his moſt adorable Majeſty. And, if angelic natures muſt not preſume to juſtify either themſelves, or their ſervices, before immaculate, and uncreated purity; how much leſs doth ſuch a carriage become Them that dwell in Houſes of Clay; whoſe original is from the duſt, and whoſe ſtate is all imperfection!"

I WOULD obſerve from hence, the very ſingular neceſſity of that Poverty of Spirit, which intirely renounces its own attainments; and, conſequently, ſubmits to the righteouſneſs of the incarnate GOD. To inculcate this leſſon, the Son of the Bleſſed came down from heaven; and preſſed no other principle, with ſo repeated * an importunity, on his hearers. To inſtil the ſame doctrine, the HOLY GHOST touched the lips of the Apoſtles with ſacred eloquence; and made it an eminent part of their commiſſion,

will obſerve a new turn given to the ſentiment, and much nobler than that which our Engliſh tranſlation exhibits. The paſſage, thus rendered, ſpeaks a truth incomparably more weighty and needful to be inculcated. A truth exactly parallel to that humbling confeſſion of the prophet, "We are all "as an unclean thing; and to that ſolemn declaration of the "pſalmiſt, "In thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified." Vide Schult. in loc.

* It is well worthy of our obſervation, ſays an excellent commentator, That no one ſentence uttered by our Lord, is ſo frequently repeated as this, "Whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he that ſhall humble himſelf, ſhall be exalted:" which occurs at leaſt ten times in the Evangeliſts.

commiſſion, "to bring down every high imagina-"tion." That no expedient might be wanting, to give it a deep and laſting efficacy on the human mind; a phantom ariſes from the valley of the ſhadow of death, or a teacher deſcends from the habitation of ſpirit.—Whatever then we neglect; let us not neglect to cultivate this Grace, which has been ſo variouſly taught, ſo powerfully enforced.

HARK! a doleful voice.—With ſudden ſtarts, and hideous ſcreams, it diſturbs the ſilence of the peaceful night. 'Tis the Screech Owl, ſometimes in frantic, ſometimes in diſconſolate accents, uttering her woes †.—She flies the vocal grove, and ſhuns the ſociety of all the feathered choir. The blooming gardens, and flowery meads, have no charms for her. Obſcene ſhades, ragged ruins, and walls overgrown with ivy, are her favourite haunts. Above, the mouldering precipice nods, and threatens a fall; below, the toad crawls, or the poiſonous adder hiſſes. The ſprightly morning, which awakens other animals into joy, adminiſters no pleaſure to this gloomy Recluſe. Even the ſmiling face of day is her averſion; and all its lovely ſcenes create nothing but uneaſineſs.

So, juſt ſo, would it fare with the ungodly; were it poſſible to ſuppoſe their admiſſion, into the chaſte and bright Abodes of endleſs Felicity. They would find nothing but diſappointment and ſhame, even at the fountain-head of happineſs and honour. For how could the tongue, habituated to profaneneſs, taſte any delight in joining the harmonious adorations of heaven? How could the lips, cankered

† "Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo
"Sæpe queri, longaſque in fletum ducere voces."

Thus ſung that charming Genius, that Prince of the antient poets, that moſt conſummate maſter of elegance and accuracy; all whoſe ſentiments are Nature, whoſe every deſcription is a picture, whoſe whole language is muſic.——Virgil.

kered with ſlander, reliſh the raptures of everlaſting praiſe? Where would be the ſatisfaction of the vain beauty, or the ſupercilious grandee? Since in the temple of the ſkies, no incenſe of flattery would be addreſſed to the one; nor any obſequious homage paid to the other. The tranſcendent, and immaculate purity of the bleſſed God would flaſh confuſion on the laſcivious eye. And the envious mind muſt be on a rack of ſelf-tormenting paſſions; to obſerve millions of happy beings, ſhining in all the perfections of glory, and ſolacing themſelves in the fulneſs of joy. In ſhort, the unſanctified ſoul, amidſt holy, and triumphant ſpirits: even in the refined regions of bliſs and immortality; would be like this melancholy bird diſlodged from her darkſome retirement, and impriſoned under the beams of day ‡.

The voice of this creature ſcreaming at our windows, or of the raven croaking over our roof, is, they ſay, a Token of approaching Death. There are perſons who would regard ſuch an incident, with no ſmall degree of ſolicitude. Trivial as it is; it would damp their ſpirits, and, perhaps, break their reſt.——One cannot but wonder, that people ſhould ſuffer themſelves to be affrighted at

‡ I cannot forbear taking notice, with what admirable emphaſis and propriety our Lord touches this important point, in his memorable conference with Nicodemus. Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, Except a man be born again, he CANNOT enter into the kingdom of heaven:" *q. d.* "I wave the Authority of the Supreme Judge, and ſpeak with the inſtructive condeſcenſion of a maſter in Iſrael. Though I might, without being liable to the leaſt controul, paſs it into a ſovereign decree; That unrenewed mortals, who are ſlaves to corrupt appetite, SHALL NOT enter the habitations of the juſt; I rather chuſe to repreſent it as a caſe utterly impoſſible; and charge the calamity not upon divine ſeverity, but human folly. Such perſons, from the very nature of things, preclude themſelves; they incapacitate their own minds; and contrarieties muſt be reconciled, before they, in their unregenerate condition, can be partakers of thoſe ſpiritual and ſublime delights." John iii. 3.

at ſuch fantaſtical, and yet be quite unaffected with real, preſages of their diſſolution. Real preſages of this awful event addreſs us from every quarter.——What are theſe incumbent Glooms, that overwhelm the world, but a kind of Pall provided for nature; and an image of that long night, which will quickly cover the inhabitants of the whole earth? What an affinity has the ſleep ‡, which will very ſoon weigh down my drowſy eye-lids, with that ſtate of intire ceſſation, in which all my ſenſes muſt be laid aſide! The ſilent chamber, and the bed of ſlumber, are a very ſignificant repreſentative of the land, where all things are huſhed; all things are forgotten.—What meant that deep Death-bell Note, which, the other evening, ſaddened the air? Laden with heavieſt accent, it ſtruck our ears, and ſeemed to knock at the door of our hearts. Surely, it brought a meſſage to ſurviving mortals, and thus the tidings ran: "Mortals, the deſtroyer of your race is on his way. The laſt enemy has begun the chace; and is gaining ground upon you, every moment. His paths are ſtrewed with heaps of ſlain. Even now, his javelin has laid one of your neighbours in the duſt; and will ſoon, very ſoon, aim the *inevitable Blow* at every one of your lives."

We need not go down to the charnel-houſe, nor carry our ſearch into the repoſitories of the dead; in order to find memorials of our impending doom. A multitude of theſe remembrancers are planted in all our paths, and point the heedleſs paſſengers to their long home. I can hardly enter a conſiderable town, but I meet the funeral proceſſion, or the mourners going about the ſtreets. The *Atchievement* ſuſpended on the wall, or the Crape ſtreaming in the air, are ſilent intimations, that both Rich and Poor have been emptying their houſes, and repleniſhing the ſepulchres. I can ſcarce join in any converſation,

‡ Et Conſanguineus Lethi Sopor. VIRG.

converſation, but mention is made of ſome that are given over by the phyſician, and hovering on the confines of eternity; of others, that have juſt left their clay amidſt weeping friends, and are gone to appear before the judge of all the earth. There's not a News-paper comes into my hand; but, amidſt all its entertaining narrations, reads ſeveral ſerious Lectures of Mortality. What elſe are the repeated accounts, of age, worn out by ſlow-conſuming ſickneſſes; and of youth, daſhed to pieces by ſome ſudden ſtroke of caſualty? Of patriots, exchanging their ſeats in the ſenate, for a lodging in the Tomb; of Miſers, reſigning their breath, and (O relentleſs deſtiny!) leaving their very riches for others? Even theſe vehicles of our amuſement are regiſters of the deceaſed; and the voice of Fame ſeldom ſounds, but in concert with a Knell.

THESE monitors croud every place; not ſo much as the ſcenes of our diverſions excepted. What are the decorations of our public buildings and the moſt elegant furniture of our parlours; but the imagery of death, and trophies of the tomb? That marble buſt; and thoſe gilded pictures; how ſolemnly they recognize the fate of others, and ſpeakingly remind us of our own!—I ſee; I hear; and Oh! I feel, this great truth. It is interwoven with my conſtitution. The frequent decays of the ſtructure, foretel its final ruin. What are all the pains, that have been darted through my limbs; what every diſeaſe, that has aſſaulted my health; but the advanced guards of the foe? What are the languors and wearineſs, that attend the labours of each revolving day; but the more ſecret practices of the adverſary, ſlowly undermining the earthly tabernacle?

AMIDST ſo many notices, ſhall we go on thoughtleſs and unconcerned? Can none of theſe prognoſtics, which are ſure as oracles, awaken our attention, and engage our circumſpection? Noah, 'tis written,

written, " being warned of God, prepared an ark." O! imitate this excellent example. Admoniſhed by ſuch a cloud of witneſſes, becontinually putting thyſelf in a readineſs for the laſt change. Let not that day, of which thou haſt ſo many infallible ſigns, come upon thee unawares.—Get the Ivy untwined, and thy affection diſentangled from this inchanting world; that thou may'ſt be able to quit it, without reluctance. Get the dreadful Hand-writing cancelled, and all thy ſins blotted out; that thou may'ſt depart in peace, and have nothing to fear at the deciſive tribunal. Get, O! get thy ſoul intereſted in the Redeemer's Merits, and tranſformed into his ſacred Image; then, ſhalt thou be meet for the inheritance of Saints in light, and may'ſt even deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt.

Sometimes, in my evening walk, I have heard

" ———The wakeful bird
" Sing darkling, and, in ſhadieſt covert hid,
" Tune her nocturnal note ‡.

How different the Airs of this charming ſongſter, from thoſe harſh and boding Outcries! The little creature ran through all the variations of muſic; and ſhewed herſelf miſtreſs of every grace, that conſtitutes or embelliſhes harmony.——Sometimes, ſhe ſwells a manly throat, and her ſong kindles into ardor; the Tone is ſo bold, and ſtrikes with ſuch energy, that you would imagine the ſprightly ſerenader in the very next thicket. Anon, the Strain languiſhes, and the mournful minſtrel melts into tenderneſs: the melancholy notes juſt ſteal upon the ſhades, and faintly touch your ear; or, in ſoft and

‡ Milt. Par. loſt. B. III. l. 38.

and ſadly-pleaſing accents, ſeem to die along the diſtant vale. Silence is all attention; and night liſtens to the trilling tale.

WHAT an invitation is this, to ſlip away from the thronged city! This coy and modeſt minſtrel entertains only the Lovers of Retirement. Thoſe that are carouſing over their bowls, or ranting at the riotous club, loſe this feaſt of harmony.——In like manner, the pleaſures of religion; the joy of reconciliation with God; the ſatisfaction ariſing from the unbounded, raviſhing, proſpect of a bliſsful immortality; theſe are all loſt to the mind, that is ever in the Croud; and dares not, or delights not, to retire into itſelf.——Are we charmed with the nightingale's ſong? Do we wiſh to have it nearer, and hear it oftner? O! let us ſeek a renewed heart, and a reſigned will; a conſcience that whiſpers peace, and paſſions that are tuned by grace; then ſhall we never want a melody in our own Breaſts, far more muſically pleaſing, than ſweet Philomela's ſweeteſt Strains.

As different as the voices of theſe birds, are the Circumſtances of thoſe few mortals, who continue awake.—Some are ſquandering, pearls, ſhall I ſay, or kingdoms? No; but what is unſpeakably more precious, time. Squandering this ineſtimable talent, with the moſt ſenſeleſs and wanton prodigality. Not content with allowing a few ſpare minutes, for the purpoſe of neceſſary recreation; they laviſh many hours, devote whole nights, to that idle diverſion of ſhuffling, ranging, and detaching, a ſet of painted paſteboards.——Others, inſtead of this buſy trifling, act the part of their own tormentors. They even picquet themſelves * and call it amuſement; they are torn by wild horſes, and yet term

* In alluſion to a very painful puniſhment, inflicted on delinquents among the ſoldiery.

term it a ſport. What elſe is the Gameſter's practice, while his mind is held in the moſt anxious ſuſpence, and agitated by the fierceſt Extremes of hope and fear? While the dice are rattling, his heart is throbbing; his fortune is tottering; and poſſibly, at the very next throw, the one ſinks in the gulph of ruin, the other is hurried into the rage of diſtraction.

Some ſnatched from the bloom of health, and the lap of plenty, are confined to the Chamber of Sickneſs. Where they are conſtrained (O ſad alternative!) either to plunge into the everlaſting world, in an unprepared Condition; or elſe, to think over all the Follies of a heedleſs life, and all the Bitterneſs of approaching death. The diſeaſe rages; it baffles the force of medicine; and urges the reluctant wretch, to the brink of the precipice. While furies rouſe the conſcience, and point at the bottomleſs pit below.—Perhaps, his drooping Mother deprived long ago of the huſband of her boſom, and bereft of all her other offspring; is, even now, receiving the blow which conſummates her misfortunes †. In vain, ſhe tries to aſſuage the ſorrows of

† This brings to my mind one of the deepeſt and moſt affecting Mourning Pieces, extant in writing. The ſacred hiſtorian paints it in all the ſimplicity of ſtyle; and yet in all the ſtrength of colouring—"When Jeſus came nigh to the gate of the city, "behold; there was a dead man carried out, the only ſon of "his mother, and ſhe was a widow."—What a beautiful gradation is here! Every freſh circumſtance is an additional aggravation of the calamity: Till, at length, the deſcription is worked up into the moſt finiſhed picture, of exquiſite and inconſolable diſtreſs—He was a young Man: cut off in the flower of life, amidſt a thouſand gay expectations, and ſmiling hopes.—He was an only Son; the afflicted mother's All: So that none remained to preſerve the name, or perpetuate the family. And, what rendered the caſe ſtill more deplorable, She was a Widow: Left intirely deſolate; abandoned to her woes, without any to ſhare her ſorrows, or comfort her

of a beloved ſon; in vain, ſhe attempts, with her tender offices, to prolong a life, dearer than her own. He faints in her arms; he bows his head; he drops in death. The laſt pang, which diſlodges the unwilling ſoul, rends an only Child, from the yearning embraces of a parent; and tears away the ſupport of her age from a diſconſolate widow.

While Thoſe long for a reprieve; Others invite the ſtroke. Quite weary of the world, with a reſtleſs impatience, they ſigh for diſſolution. Some, pining away under the tedious decays of an incurable Conſumption: or gaſping for breath, and almoſt ſuffocated, amidſt an Inundation of dropſical Waters. On ſome, a relentleſs Cancer has faſtened its envenomed teeth; and is gnawing them, though in the midſt of bodily vigour, in the midſt of pitying friends, gradually to death. Others are on a rack of agonies, by convulſive Fits of the Stone: Oh, how the pain writhes their limbs; how the ſweat bedews their fleſh, and their eye-balls wildly roll! Methinks, the night condoles with theſe her diſtreſſed children; and ſheds dewy Tears, over their ſorrowful abodes.—But, of all mortals, They are the moſt exquiſitely miſerable, who groan beneath the preſſure of a melancholy Mind; or ſmart under the laſhes, of a reſentful Conſcience. Though robed in ermine; or covered with jewels; the ſtate of a ſlave chained to the gallies, or of an exile condemned to the mines, is a perfect paradiſe compared with theirs.

O! that the Votaries of Mirth; whoſe life is a continued round of merriment and whim; would beſtow one ſerious reflection, on this Variety of human Woes. It might render them leſs enamoured,

her under her misfortunes.—Is not this a fine ſketch of the Picturesque? Who can conſider the narrative, with any attention; and not feel his heart penetrated, with a tender commiſeration? Luke vii. 12.

ed, with the few languid ſweets, that are thinly ſcattered through this vale of tears, and are invironed with ſuch a multitude of ragged thorns. It might teach them, no longer to dance away their years, with a giddy rambling impulſe; but to aſpire with a determined Aim, after thoſe happy regions, where delights, abundant and un-embittered, flow.

CAN there be circumſtances, which a man of wiſdom would more earneſtly deprecate, than theſe ſeveral caſes of grievous tribulation? There are; and, what is very aſtoniſhing, they are frequently the deſire and the choice of thoſe, who fancy themſelves the ſole heirs of happineſs: Thoſe, I mean, who are launching out into the depths of Extravagance, and running exceſſive lengths of Riot; who are proſtituting their reputation, and ſacrificing their peace, to their luſts: who are ſapping the foundations of their health, in debaucheries; and ſhipwrecking the intereſts of their families, in their bowls: and, what is worſe, are forfeiting the joys of an eternal Heaven, for the ſordid ſatisfactions of the beaſt, for the tranſitory ſenſations of an hour.——O! ye ſlaves of appetite, how far am I from envying your inordinate revels! Ah! little are you ſenſible; that while voluptuouſneſs ſhowers her roſes, and luxury diffuſes her odours; they ſcatter Poiſons alſo, and ſhed unheeded Bane *. Evils, incomparably more malignant, than the worm-wood and gall of the ſharpeſt affliction.—— Since death is in the drunkard's cup; and worſe than poniards in the harlot's embrace; may it ever be the privilege of the man whom I love, to go without his ſhare of theſe peſtilential ſweets! §

ABUNDANCE

* Yes; in the flow'rs that wreathe the ſparkling bowl,
Fell adders hiſs, and pois'nous ſerpents roll.

PRIOR's Sol.

§ Quam ſuave eſt ſuavitatibus iſtis carere!"——In this fine ſentence quoted from St. Auguſtine, there is much the ſame beautiful

Abundance of living Sparks glitter in the lanes, and twinkle under the hedges. I ſuppoſe, they are the Glow-worms; which have lighted their little lamps, and obtained leave, through the abſence of the ſun, to play a feeble beam. A faint glimmer, juſt ſerves to render them perceivable; without tending at all to diſſipate the ſhades, or making any amends for the departed day.—Should a traveller drooping with wet, and ſhivering with cold, hover round this Mimickry of Fire; in order to dry his garments, and warm his benumbed limbs: Should ſome unfortunate rover; groping for his way, in black and dark night, take one of theſe languid Tapers, as a light to his feet, and lantern to his paths: How certainly would both the one, and the other, be fruſtrated of their expectation!——And are They more likely to ſucceed, who, neglecting that ſovereign balm, which diſtilled from the croſs, fly to any carnal diverſion, to heal the anxiety of the mind? who, deaf to the infallible deciſions of Revelation, reſign themſelves over to the erroneous conjectures of Reaſon, in order to find the way that leadeth unto life? Or laſtly, who apply to the froth of this vain world, for a ſatisfactory portion, and a ſubſtantial happineſs? Their conduct is in no degree wiſer; their diſappointment equally ſure; and their miſcarriage infinitely more diſaſtrous. To ſpeak in the delicate language of a ſacred writer, "They ſow the wind, and will reap the whirlwind *."

To ſay the truth; the pleaſures of the world, which we are all ſo prone to doat upon; and the powers of fallen Reaſon, which ſome are ſo apt to

beautiful turn, and noble ſentiment, as in thoſe lines of Mr. Pope.

Count all th' advantage proſp'rous vice attains,
'Tis but what virtue flies from, and diſdains.

* Hoſ. viii. 7.

to idolize †; are not only vain, but treacherous. Not only a painted flame, like theſe ſparkling animals; but much like thoſe unctuous exhalations, which ariſe from the marſhy ground, and often dance before the eyes of the benighted way-faring man. Kindled into a ſort of fire, they perſonate a guide, and ſeem to offer their ſervice: but, blazing with deluſive light, miſlead their followers into hidden pits, headlong precipices, and unfathomable gulphs; where, far from his beloved friends, far from all hopes of ſuccour, the unhappy wanderer is ſwallowed up, and loſt.

Not long ago, we obſerved a very ſurpriſing appearance in the weſtern ſky. A prodigious ſtar took its flaming route through thoſe coaſts; and trailed, as it paſſed, a tremendous length of fires, almoſt over half the heavens. Some, I imagine, viewed

† I hope it will be obſerved, That I am far from decrying that noble faculty of reaſon, when exerted in her proper ſphere; and acting in a deferential ſubordination to the revealed will of heaven. While ſhe exerciſes her powers, within theſe appointed limits, ſhe is unſpeakably ſerviceable; and cannot be too induſtriouſly cultivated. But, when ſhe ſets herſelf up in proud contradiſtinction to the ſacred oracles; when, all-arrogant and ſelf-ſufficient, ſhe ſays to the word of Scripture, 'I have no need of thee:' She is then, I muſt be bold to maintain, not only a glow-worm, but an *ignis fatuus*; not only a bubble, but a ſnare.

May not this remark, with the ſtricteſt propriety, and without the leaſt limitations, be applied to the generality of our modern romances, novels, and too many of our theatrical entertainments? Theſe are commonly calculated, to inflame a wanton fancy; or, if conducted with ſo much modeſty, as not to debauch the affections, they pervert the judgment, and bewilder the taſte. By their incredible adventures; their extravagant parade of gallantry: and their characters, widely different from truth and nature; they inſpire fooliſh conceits; beget idle expectations; introduce a diſguſt of genuine hiſtory: and indiſpoſe their admirers, to acquieſce in the decent civilities, or to reliſh the ſober ſatisfactions of common life.

viewed the portentous ſtranger, with much the ſame anxious amazement, as Belſhazzar beheld the hand-writing upon the wall. Some looked upon it as a bloody * flag; hung out by divine reſentment, over a guilty world. Some read, in its glaring viſage, the fate of nations, and the fall of kingdoms †. To others, it ſhook, or ſeemed to ſhake, peſtilence and war from its horrid hair.———For my own part, I am not ſo ſuperſtitious as to regard what every aſtrologer has to prognoſticate; upon the acceſſion of a comet, or the awful projection of its huge vapoury train. Nothing can be more precarious and unjuſtifiable, than to draw ſuch concluſions from ſuch events; ſince they are neither præternatural effects, nor do they throw the frame of things into any diſorder. I would rather adore that omnipotent Being, who rolled thoſe ſtupendous orbs from his creating hand; and leads them, by his providential eye, through unmeaſureable tracts of æther: Who bids them now approach the ſun, and glow with unſufferable ardors §; now, retreat to the utmoſt bounds of our planetary ſyſtem, and make their entry among other worlds.

They are harmleſs viſitants. I acquit them from the charge of cauſing, or being acceſſary to, deſolating plagues. Would to God there were no other

* ——' Liquida ſi quando nocte cometæ
Sanguinei lugubre rubent.——— Virg.

† ———' Crinemque timendi
Sideris, & terris mutantem regna cometem.
Lucr.

§ "The comet in the year 1680, according to Sir Iſaac Newton's computation, was, in its neareſt approach, above 166 times nearer the ſun than the earth is. Conſequently, its heat was then 28000 times greater than that of Summer. So that a ball of iron as big as the earth, heated by it, would hardly become cool in 50000 years." Derh. Aſtr. Theol. p. 237.

other more formidable indications, or approaching judgments, or impending ruin! But, alas! when vice becomes predominant, and irreligion almoſt epidemical; when the ſabbaths of a jealous God are notoriouſly profaned; and that "Name, which "is great, wonderful, and holy," is proſtituted to the meaneſt, or abuſed to the moſt execrable purpoſes; when the worſhip of the great Creator and Preſerver of mankind is baniſhed, from many of the moſt conſpicuous families; and it is deemed a piece of rude impertinence, ſo much as to mention the gracious Redeemer, in our genteel interviews; when it paſſes for an elegant freedom of behaviour, to ridicule the myſteries of Chriſtianity; and a ſpecies of refined converſation, to taint the air with laſcivious hints; when thoſe that ſit in the ſcorner's chair, ſin with a high hand; and many of thoſe that wear the profeſſor's garb, are deſtitute of the power, and content themſelves with the mere form of godlineſs; when ſuch is the ſtate of a community, there is reaſon, too apparent reaſon, to be horribly afraid. Such phænomena, abounding in the moral world, are not fanciful, but real omens. Will not an injured God "be avenged on ſuch a nation as this? Will he not be provoked to ſweep them with the beſom of deſtruction *?"

O! that the inhabitants of Great-Britain would lay theſe alarming conſiderations to heart! The Lord of Hoſts has commanded the ſword of civil

* Iſa xiv. 23. The eternal Sovereign, ſpeaking of Babylon, denounces this threatning, 'I will ſweep it with the beſom of deſtruction.'——What a noble, but dreadful image, is here! How ſtrongly and awfully pourtrayed; how pregnant alſo in its ſignification! intimating at once the vile nature, the total extirpation, of this wicked people; and the perfect eaſe, with which the glorious God would execute his intended vengeance.

diſcord to return into its ſheath. But have we returned, every one from his evil ways? Are we become a renewed people, devoted to a dying Saviour; and zealous of good works?—What mean thoſe peals of ſobs, which burſt from the expiring cattle?——What mean thoſe melancholy moans, where the luſty droves were wont to low †? What mean thoſe arrows of untimely death, diſcharged on our innocent and uſeful animals? Are not theſe the weapons of divine diſpleaſure, and manifeſt chaſtiſements of a ſinful generation *? Has not God, the "God to whom vengeance belongeth," ſtill a controverſy with our land? And who can tell where the viſitation will end? What a ſtorm may follow theſe preluſive drops? O! that we may "hear the rod, and who hath appointed it!" Taught by theſe penal effects of our diſobedience, may we remove the accurſed thing from our tents; our practices; our arts! may we turn from all ungodlineſs, before wrath come upon us to the utmoſt; before iniquity prove our ruin!

Sometimes, at this hour, another moſt remarkable ſight amuſes the curious, and alarms the vulgar. A blaze of lambent meteors is kindled; or ſome very extraordinary lights are refracted, in the quarters of the north. Sometimes, the radiant ſtreamers meet and mingle; inſomuch, that the air ſeems to be all conflicting fire: At other times, they ſtart from one another; and, like legions in precipitate

† If theſe papers ſhould be ſo fortunate, as to out-live their Author; perhaps it may be needful to inform poſterity, that the above-mentioned hints, allude to a moſt terrible, contagious, and mortal diſtemper, raging at the time of writing them, among the horned cattle, in various parts of the kingdom.

* "Hinc lætis vituli vulgo moriuntur in herbis,
Et dulces animas plena ad præſepia reddunt.
Balatu hinc pecorum & crebris mugitibus amnes,
Arenteſque ſonant ripæ, colleſque ſupini." Virg.

precipitate flight, ſweep, each a ſeparate way, through the firmament. Now, they are quieſcent; anon, they are thrown into a quivering motion; preſently, a nimble glance diffuſes them over the whole hemiſphere. Sometimes, with an aſpect awfully ludicrous, they repreſent extravagant and antick vagaries; at other times, you would ſuſpect, that ſome inviſible power was playing off the artillery of the ſkies, and giving us the flaſh, without the noiſe.

The villagers gaze at the ſpectacle, firſt with wonder, then with horror. A general panic ſeizes the country. Every heart throbs, and every face is pale. The crouds that flock together, inſtead of diminiſhing, increaſe the dread. They catch contagion, from each other's looks and words; while fear is in every eye, and every tongue ſpeaks the language of terror. Some ſee hideous ſhapes, armies mixing in fierce encounter, or fields ſwimming with blood. Some foreſee direful events, ſtates overthrown, or mighty monarchs tottering on their thrones. Others, ſcared with ſtill more frightful apprehenſions, think of nothing but the day of doom. "Sure, ſays one, the unalterable hour is ſtruck, and the end of all things come.—See, replies another, how the blaſted ſtars look wan! Are not theſe the ſigns of the Son of Man, coming in the clouds of heaven?——Jeſus prepare us, cries a third, and lifts his eyes in devotion, for the archangel's trump, and the great tribunal!"

If this waving brightneſs, which plays innocently over our heads, be ſo amazing to multitudes; what inexpreſſible conſternation muſt overwhelm unthinking mortals, when the general conflagration commences? The day, the dreadful day, is approaching, "In the which the heavens

ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe †, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat; the earth alſo, and all the works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up." That mighty hand, which once opened the windows from on high, and broke up the fountains of the great deep, will then unlock all the magazines of fire, and pour a ſecond deluge upon the whole earth. The vengeful flames, kindled by the breath of the Almighty, ſpread themſelves from the centre to the circumference. Nothing can withſtand their impetuoſity; nothing can eſcape their rage. Univerſal deſolation attends their progreſs. Magnificent palaces, and ſolemn temples, are laid in aſhes. Spacious cities, and impregnable towers are mingled in one ſmoaking maſs. Not only the productions of human art, but the works of Almighty power, are fuel for the devouring element. The everlaſting mountains melt, like the ſnows which cover their ſummit. Even vaſt oceans ſerve only to augment the inconceivable rapidity and fury of the

† 2 Pet. iii. 10. I have often thought this verſe an eminent inſtance of that kind of beautiful writing, in which the very ſound bears a ſort of ſignificancy; at leaſt, carries an exact correſpondence with the ſenſe. The original expreſſion—ροιζηδον—is one of the hoarſeſt and deepeſt words in language. Nothing could be more exquiſitely adapted to affect the ear, as well as impreſs the imagination, with the wreck of nature, and the craſh of a falling world.——I ſcarce ever read this clauſe, but it brings to my mind that admired deſcription in Milton;

——— On a ſudden open fly
With impetuous recoil, and jarring ſound,
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harſh thunder——— Book II. l. 879.

It is a pleaſing employ, and one of the nobleſt offices of true criticiſm, to point out theſe inferior recommendations of the ſacred Claſſics. Though I believe, the inſpired writers themſelves, amidſt all the elevation and magnificence of their divine ideas, diſdained a ſcrupulous attention to ſuch little niceties of ſtyle.

the blaze.——O! how ſhall I, or others, ſtand undiſmayed amidſt the glare of a burning world; unleſs the LORD JEHOVAH be our defence? How ſhall we be upheld in ſecurity, when the globe itſelf is ſinking in a fiery ruin; unleſs the Rock of Ages be our ſupport?

BEHOLD! a new ſpectacle of wonder! The moon is making her entry into the ſky. See her riſing in clouded majeſty: All grand and ſtately, but ſomewhat ſullied in her aſpect. However, ſhe brightens, as ſhe advances; and grows clearer, as ſhe climbs higher; till at length, her ſilver loſes all its droſs; ſhe unveils her peerleſs light; and becomes "the beauty of heaven, the glory of the ſtars *;" delighting every eye, and clearing the whole world, with the brightneſs of her appearance, and the ſoftneſs of her ſplendors.—O! thou queen of the ſhades! may it be my ambition to follow this thy inſtructive example! while others are fond to tranſcribe the faſhions of little courts, and to mimic perſonages of inferior ſtate; be it mine to intimate thy improving purity! May my conduct become more unblemiſhed, and my temper more refined; as I proceed, farther, in my probationary courſe! May every ſordid deſire wear away, and every irregular appetite be gradually loſt; as I make nearer approaches to the celeſtial manſions! Will not this be a comfortable evidence, that I too ſhall ſhine, in my adored Redeemer's kingdom? Shine, with a richer luſtre, than that which radiates from thy reſplendent orb; ſhine, with unfading luſtre, when every ray, that beams from thy beauteous ſphere, is totally extinguiſhed?

THE day afforded us a variety of entertaining ſights. Theſe were all withdrawn, at the approach of darkneſs. The ſtars, kindly officious, immediately

* Eccluſ xliii. 9.
——'Lucidem cœli decus.' Hor.

immediately lent us their aid. This ſerved to alleviate the frown of night; not to recover the objects from their obſcurity. A faint ray, ſcarcely reflected, and not from the entire ſurface of things, gave the ſtraining eye a very imperfect glimpſe; ſuch as rather mocked, than ſatisfied viſion.—— But, now the Moon is riſen, and has collected all her beams, the veil is again taken off from the countenance of nature. We once again behold the world's great picture; not indeed in its late lively colours, but more delicately ſhaded, and arrayed in ſofter charms *.

WHAT a majeſtic Scene is here! how incomparably grand, and exquiſitely fine!——The Moon, like on immenſe cryſtal Lamp, pendent in the magnificent cieling of the Heavens. The Stars, like ſo many thouſands of golden tapers, fixed in their azure ſockets; all pouring their luſtre on ſpacious cities, and lofty mountains; glittering on the ocean; gleaming on the foreſt; and opening a proſpect, wide as the eye can glance, more various than fancy can paint †.——We are forward to admire the performances

* ——————— Now reigns
Full-orb'd the Moon, and with more pleaſing light
Shadowy ſets off the face of things. MILT.

† As when the Moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's clear azure ſpreads her ſacred light;
When not a breath diſturbs the deep ſerene,
And not a cloud o'ercaſts, the ſolemn ſcene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And ſtars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure ſhed,
And tip with ſilver ev'ry mountain's head;
Then ſhine the vales, the rocks in proſpect riſe;
A flood of glory burſts from all the ſkies;
The conſcious ſwains, rejoicing in the ſight,
Eye the blue vault, and bleſs the uſeful light.

Iliad VIII.

I tranſcribe

performances of human art. A landſcape, elegantly deſigned, and ſketched out with a maſterly hand; a piece of ſtatuary, that ſeems, amidſt all the recommendations of exact proportion, and graceful attitude, to ſoften into fleſh, and almoſt breathe with life; theſe little imitations of nature we behold with a pleaſing ſurprize. And ſhall we be leſs affected, leſs delighted, and with the inexpreſſibly noble, and completely finiſhed Original? ——The ample dimenſions of Ranelagh's Dome; the gay illuminations of Vaux-hall Grove; I ſhould ſcorn to mention on ſuch an occaſion; were they not the objects of general admiration. Shall we be charmed with thoſe puny Eſſays of finite ingenuity; and touched with no tranſport, at this ſtupendous diſplay of Omnipotent ſkill? at the auguſt grandeur, and ſhining ſtatelineſs, of the firmament? that forms an alcove for ten thouſand worlds, and is ornamented with myriads of everlaſting luminaries.———Surely, this muſt betray, not only a total want of Religion; but the moſt abject littleneſs of mind, and the utmoſt Poverty of Genius.

THE Moon is not merely "an ornament in the high places of the LORD;" but of ſignal ſervice to the inhabitants of the earth.———How uncomfortable is deep, pitchy, total darkneſs! eſpecially in the long abſence of the Winter's Sun. Welcome therefore, thrice welcome, this auſpicious gift of Providence; to enliven the nocturnal gloom, and line with ſilver the raven-coloured mantle of night! ——How deſirable to have our Summer-Evenings illuminated! that we may be able to tread the dewy meads,

I tranſcribe theſe lines, becauſe Mr. Pope ſays, They exhibit, in the original, the fineſt night-piece in poetry. And, if they are ſo beautiful in Homer's language; who can ſuſpect their ſuffering any diſadvantage from the pen of his admirable tranſlator?

meads, and breathe the delicious fragrancy of our gardens; eſpecially, when the ſultry heats render it irkſome and fatiguing, to walk abroad by day.—How chearing to the Shepherd the uſe of this univerſal lantern; as he tends his fleecy charge, or late conſigns them to their hurdled cots! How pleaſing to the Mariner, as he plows the midnight main, to adjuſt the tackling, and explore his way, under the influence of this beaming ſconce!—For theſe, and other beneficial purpoſes, the hand of the ALMIGHTY has hung the ſtately branch on high; and filled it with a ſplendor, not confined to a ſingle edifice, or commenſurate to a particular ſquare, but diffuſive as the whole extent of the hemiſphere.

THE moſt faithful of our inferior ſervants are ſometimes tardy in their office; ſometimes negligent of their duty; but this celeſtial attendant is moſt exactly punctual, at all the ſtated periods of her miniſtration. If we chooſe to prolong our journey, after the ſun is gone down; the Moon, during her whole increaſe, is always ready to act in the capacity of a guide. If we are inclined to ſet out, very early in the morning; the moon in her decreaſe, prevents the dawn, in order to offer her aſſiſtance. And, becauſe it is ſo pleaſant a thing for the eyes to behold the light; the moon at her full, by a courſe of uninterrnitted waiting, never fails to give us, as it were, a double day.—How apparently has the divine wiſdom intereſted itſelf, in providing even for the pleaſurable accommodation of man! How deſirous, that he ſhould want no piece of commodious furniture; no kind of delightful convenience! And, in proſecution of theſe benevolent intentions, has annexed ſo valuable an appendage to the terreſtrial globe.—Juſtly, therefore, does the Pſalmiſt celebrate that admirable conſtitution, which ordained the moon and the ſtars to govern

govern the night, as an inſtance of rich goodneſs; of mercy, which endureth for ever †.

The moon, it is confeſſed, is no luminous body. All the brightneſs, which beautifies her countenance, is originally in the ſun, and no more than tranſmiſſively in her. That glorious orb is the parent of day, and the palace of light. From thence, the morning-ſtar gilds her horn *; from thence, the planetary circles are crowned with luſtre; and from thence, the moon derives all her ſilver radiance. ——It is pleaſing to reflect, that ſuch is the caſe with the all-ſufficient Redeemer, and his dependent people. We are repleniſhed from his fulneſs. What do we poſſeſs, which we have not received; and what can we deſire, which we may not expect; from that never-failing ſource of all good? He is the author of our faith, and the former of our graces. In his unſpotted life, we ſee the path; in his meritorious death, the price; and in his triumphant reſurrection, the proof of bliſs and immortality. If we offend, and fall ſeven times a day; He is the Lord our peace ‖. If we are depraved, and our beſt deeds very unworthy; He is the Lord our righteouſneſs ‡. If we are blind, and even brutiſh in heavenly knowledge; He is the Lord our wiſdom §; his word diſpels the ſhades; his Spirit ſcatters the intellectual gloom; his eye looks our darkneſs into day. In ſhort, we are nothing, and "Christ is all." Worſe than defective in ourſelves,

† Pſal. cxxxvi. 9.

* I might, to juſtify this expreſſion, obſerve, that the planet Venus, commonly called the Morning-Star, is found, by the Teleſcopes frequently to appear horned; or to have a creſcent of light, ſomewhat like the moon, a little before or after her conjunction. But this would be a remark, too deep and refined for my ſcheme; which proceeds only upon a ſuperficial knowledge, and the moſt obvious appearances of nature.

‖ Judg. vi. 27. ‡ Jer. xxiii. 6. § 1 Cor. i. 30.

ſelves, "we are complete in him." So that if we ſhine, it is with delegated rays, and borrowed light. We act by a ſtrength, and glory in merits, not our own.——O! may we be thoroughly ſenſible of our dependence on the Saviour! May we conſtantly imbibe his propitious beams; and never, by indulging belief, or back-ſliding into folly, withdraw our ſouls from his benign influences! leſt we loſe our comfort, and our holineſs; as the fair ruler of the night loſes her ſplendor, when her urn is turned from its fountain *, and receives no more communications of ſolar effulgence.

THE moon is inceſſantly varying, either in her aſpect, or her ſtages.——Sometimes, her face is all luſtre. Anon, a radiant creſcent adorns her brow. Soon, it dwindles into a ſlender ſtreak. Till, at length, all her beauty vaniſhes, and ſhe becomes a beamleſs orb.——Sometimes, ſhe riſes with the deſcending day; and begins her proceſſion, amidſt admiring multitudes. Ere long, ſhe defers her progreſs till the midnight watches; and ſteals, unobſerved, upon the ſleeping world.—Sometimes, ſhe juſt appears on the edges of the weſtern Horizon, and drops us a ceremonious viſit. Within a while, ſhe ſets out on her nightly tour, from the oppoſite regions of the eaſt; traverſes the whole hemiſphere; and never offers to withdraw, till the more refulgent partner of her ſway renders her preſence unneceſſary. —In a word, ſhe is, while converſant among us, ſtill waxing or waining, and "never continueth in one ſtay."

SUCH is the moon; and ſuch are all ſublunary things; expoſed to perpetual viciſſitudes.——How often, and how ſoon, have the faint echoes of renown

* Alluding to thoſe truly poetical lines in Milton,

Hither, as to their fountain, other ſtars,
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light.

Par. Loſt. B. VII. l. 364.

nown ſlept in ſilence; or been converted into the clamours of obloquy! the ſame lips, almoſt with the ſame breath, cry Hoſanna and crucify.—Have not riches confeſſed their notorious uncertainty, a thouſand and a thouſand times? Either melting away, like ſnow in our hands, by inſenſible degrees; or eſcaping, like a winged priſoner from its cage, with a precipitate flight.——Have we not known the bridegroom's cloſet, an antechamber to the tomb; and heard the voice, that ſo lately pronounced the ſparkling pair huſband and wife, proclaim an everlaſting divorce; and ſeal the decree with that ſolemn aſſeveration, "aſhes to aſhes, duſt to duſt?"——Our friends, though the medicine of life; our health, though the balm of nature; are a moſt precarious poſſeſſion. How ſoon may the one become a corpſe in our arms; and how eaſily is the other deſtroyed in its vigour!——You have ſeen, no doubt, a ſet of pretty painted birds, perching on your trees, or ſporting in your meadows. You were pleaſed with the lovely viſitants, that brought beauty on their wings, and melody in their throats. But could you enſure the continuance of this agreeable entertainment? No, truly: at the leaſt diſturbing noiſe, at the leaſt terrifying appearance, they ſtart from their ſeats; they mount the ſkies; and are gone in an inſtant, gone for ever. Would you chuſe to have a happineſs, which bears date with their arrival, and expires at their departure? If you could not be content with a portion, that is ſettled only for ſuch a fortuitous term, not of years, but of moments, O! take up with nothing earthly; ſet your affections on things above; there alone is, "no variableneſs or ſhadow of turning."

JOB is not a more illuſtrious pattern of patience, than an eminent exemplification of this remark. ——View him in his private eſtate, he heaps up

ſilver

ſilver as the duſt; he waſhes his ſteps in butter; and the rock pours him out rivers of oil.—View him in his publick character, princes revere his dignity; the aged liſten to his wiſdom; every eye beholds him with delight; every tongue loads him with bleſſings.—View him in his domeſtick circumſtances, on one hand, he is defended by a troop of ſons; on the other adorned with a train of daughters; and, on all ſides, ſurrounded by "a very great houſhold."—Never was human felicity ſo conſummate; never was diſaſtrous revolution ſo ſudden. The lightning, which conſumed his cattle, was not more terrible, and ſcarce more inſtantaneous. The joyful parent is bereſt of his offspring, and his "children are buried in death." The man of affluence is ſtript of his abundance; and he that was cloathed in ſcarlet, embraces the dunghill. The venerable Patriarch is the deriſion of ſcoundrels; and the late darling of an indulgent Providence is become "a brother to dragons, a companion of owls."—Nor need we go back to former ages, for proofs of this afflicting truth. In our times; in all times; the wheel continues the ſame inceſſant whirl: and frequently thoſe, who are triumphing, to-day, in the higheſt elevations of joy; to-morrow, are bemoaning the inſtability of mortal affairs, in the very depths of miſery. *—Amidſt ſo much fluctuation and uncertainty; how wretched is the condition, which has no anchor

* I believe, I may venture to apply, what the Temanite ſays of the affairs of the wicked, to all ſublunary things; as a true deſcription of their very great inſtability. Job xxii. 16. נהר יוצק יסודם rendered by Schultens, Flumen fuſum fundamentum eorum. Their foundation (or what they reckon their moſt ſolid and ſtable poſſeſſion) is a flood poured out.—— Which is one of the boldeſt images, and moſt poetical beauties, I ever met with in any language, ſacred or profane. In order

anchor of the ſoul, ſure and ſtedfaſt? May thy loving kindneſs, O GOD, be our preſent treaſure; and thy future glory, our reverſionary inheritance! Then ſhall our happineſs not be like the full-orbed moon, which is "a light that decreaſeth in its perfection;" but like the ſun, when he goeth forth in his ſtrength, and knoweth no other change, but that of ſhining more and more unto the perfect day.

METHINKS, in this ever-varying ſphere, I ſee a repreſentation, not only of our temporal advantages, but alſo of our ſpiritual accompliſhments. Such, I am ſure, is what the kind partiality of a friend would call my righteouſneſs: and ſuch, I am apt to ſuſpect * is the righteouſneſs of every man

order to have a tolerable conception of the image, and a taſte of its beauty; you muſt ſuppoſe a torrent of waters ruſhing in broken cataracts, and with impetuous rapidity, from a ſteep and craggy mountain. Then, imagine to yourſelf an edifice, built upon the ſurge of this rolling precipice: that has no other baſis than one of thoſe whirling waves, which conſtitute ſuch a headlong ſtream——Was there ever ſuch a repreſentation of tranſitory proſperity, tending, with inconceivable ſwiftneſs, unto ruin? Yet ſuch is every form of human felicity, that is not grounded upon JESUS, and a participation of his merits, who is the rock of ages; on JESUS, and his image formed in our hearts, which is the hope of glory.

* I would not be underſtood, as meaſuring, in this reſpect, others by myſelf; but as taking my eſtimate, from the unerring ſtandard of ſcripture. And indeed proceeding on this evidence, ſupported by this authority, I might have ventured farther than a bare ſuſpicion. For, "there is not a juſt man upon earth, that doth good, and ſinneth not;" ſays the Spirit of inſpiration by Solomon (Eccleſ. vii. 20.)—Nay, ſuch is the purity, and ſo extenſive are the demands, of the divine law, that an apoſtle makes a ſtill more humbling acknowledgment, "In many things we offend All." (Jam. iii. 2.)—— And the all-wiſe Teacher, who moſt thoroughly knew our frame, directs the moſt advanced, moſt eſtabliſhed, and moſt watchful Chriſtians, to pray daily for the forgiveneſs of their "daily

man living. Now, we exerciſe it, in ſome few inſtances; in ſome little degrees. Anon, ſin revives, and leads our ſouls into a tranſient, though unwilling captivity: Now, we are meek; but ſoon, a ruffling accident intervenes, and turns our compoſure into a fretful diſquietude. Now we are humble; ſoon, we reflect upon ſome inconſiderable or imaginary ſuperiority over others, and a ſudden elatement ſwells our minds. Now, perhaps, we poſſeſs a clean Heart, and are warm with holy Love: But, O! how eaſily is the purity of our affections ſullied; how ſoon the fervor of our gratitude cooled! And is there not ſomething amiſs, even in our beſt moments? Something to be aſhamed of, in all we are; ſomething to be repented of, in all we do?

WITH what gladneſs, therefore, and adoring gratitude, ſhould we "ſubmit to the righteouſneſs "of our incarnate God;" and receive, as a divine Gift, what cannot be acquired by human Works ‡!——A writer of the firſt diſtinction, and niceſt diſcernment, ſtiles the obedience of our glorious ſurety, an everlaſting righteouſneſs *. Such as was ſubject to no interruption, nor obſcured by the leaſt blemiſh; but proceeded always in the ſame uniform tenor, of the moſt ſpotleſs perfection.——This righteouſneſs, in another ſenſe, anſwers the prophet's noble deſcription: as its beneficial

"daily Treſpaſſes"—To which teſtimonies, I beg leave to add an elegant paſſage from the Canticles; becauſe, it not only expreſſes the ſentiment of this paragraph, but illuſtrates it by the very ſame ſimilitude She (the church) is fair as the moon; clear as the ſun. Fair as the moon, the leſſer and changeable light, in her ſanctification; clear as the ſun, the greater and invariable luminary, in her juſtification. The inherent holineſs of believers being imperfect, and ſubject to many inequalities; while their imputed obedience is every way compleat, and conſtantly like itſelf. Cant. vi. 10.

‡ Rom. v. 17.—x. 3.

* Dan. ix. 24.

ficial and ſovereign efficacy knows no end; but laſts through all our life; laſts in the trying hour of death, laſts at the deciſive day of judgment; laſts through every generation; and will laſt to all eternity.

Sometimes, I have ſeen that reſplendent globe ſtript of her radiance; or, according to the emphatical language of ſcripture, "turned into blood." The earth, interpoſing with its opake body, intercepted the ſolar rays, and caſt its own gloomy ſhadow on the moon. The malignant influence gained upon her ſickening orb; extinguiſhed, more and more, the remainders of light; till at length, like one in a deep ſwoon, no comelineſs was left in her countenance; ſhe was totally overſpread with darkneſs.—At this juncture, what a multitude of eyes were gazing upon the rueful ſpectacle! Even of thoſe eyes, which diſregarded the empreſs of the night; or beheld her with indifference; when, robed in glory, and riding in her triumphal chariot, ſhe ſhed a ſofter day through the nations. But now, under theſe circumſtances of diſgrace, they watch her motions with the moſt prying attention; in every place, her misfortune is the object of general obſervation; and the prevailing topic of diſcourſe, in every company.

Is it not thus, with regard to perſons of eminence, in their reſpective ſpheres! kings at the head of their ſubjects; nobles, furrounded with their dependents; and (after names of ſo much grandeur, may I be allowed to add?) miniſters, in their pariſhes †; are each in a conſpicuous ſtation. Their behaviour, in its minuteſt ſtep, eſpecially in any miſcarriage, will be narrowly ſurveyed, and critically ſcanned. Can there be a louder call, to ponder

† Ye are the light of the world. A city that is ſet on a hill cannot be hid. Matth. v. 14.

ponder the paths of their feet, and to be particularly jealous over all their ways?—Thoſe, that move in inferior life, may groſly offend; and little alarm be given; perhaps, no notice taken. But it is not to be expected, that the leaſt ſlip in their conduct, the leaſt flaw in their character, will paſs undiſcovered. Malice, with her eagle eyes, will be ſure to diſcern them; while cenſure, with her ſhrill trumpet, will be as far from concealing them; as calumny, with her treacherous whiſpers, from extenuating them. A planet may ſink below the horizon; or a ſtar, for ſeveral months, withdraw its ſhining; and ſcarce one in ten thouſand perceive the loſs. But if the moon ſuffers a tranſient eclipſe, almoſt half the world are ſpectators of diſhonour.

VERY different was the caſe, when, at this late hour, I have taken a ſolitary walk on the weſtern cliffs. At the foot of the ſteep mountain, the ſea, all clear and ſmooth, ſpread itſelf into an immenſe plain, and held a watry mirror to the ſkies. Infinite heights above, the firmament ſtretched its azure expanſe; beſpangled with unnumbered ſtars, and adorned with the moon, "walking in bright-"neſs ‡." She ſeemed to contemplate herſelf, with a peculiar pleaſure; while the tranſparent ſurface, both received, and returned, her ſilver image. Here, inſtead of being covered with ſack cloth, ſhe ſhone with double luſtre; or rather, with a luſtre multiplied, in proportion to the number of beholders, and their various ſituations.

Such, methinks, is the effect of an exemplary behaviour, in perſons of exalted rank. Their courſe, as it is nobly diſtinguiſhed, ſo it will be happily influential. Others will catch the diffuſive ray; and be ambitious to reſemble a pattern, ſo attracting; ſo commanding. Their amiable qualities

‡ Job xxxi. 26.

ties will not terminate in themſelves: but we ſhall ſee them reflected from their families; their acquaintance; their retainers. Juſt as we may now behold another moon; trembling in the ſtream; glittering in the canal; and diſplaying its lovely impreſs, on every collection of waters.

The moon, philoſophy ſays, is a ſort of ſovereign over the great deep. Her orb, like a royal ſceptre, ſways the ocean, and actuates the fluid realms. It ſwells the tides, and perpetuates the reciprocal returns of ebb and flow. By which means, the liquid element purges off its filth; and is preſerved, from being putrefied itſelf, and from poiſoning the world. Is the moon thus operative on the vaſt abyſs? And ſhall not the faith of eternal and infinite delights to come, be equally efficacious on this ſoul of mine?——Far above her argent fields, are treaſures of happineſs, unſeen by mortal eye; by mortal ear unheard; and unconceived by any human imagination. In that deſirable world, the moſt diſtinguiſhed honours alſo are conferred; in compariſon with which, the thrones and diadems of earthly monarchs are empty pageants, and childiſh toys. Yonder arch of ſapphire, with all its ſpangles of gold, is but the floor of thoſe divine abodes. What then are the apartments; what is the palace? How bright with glories; how rich with bliſs?

O! Ye manſions of bleſſedneſs; ye beauties of my Father's kingdom; that far outſhine theſe lamps of the viſible heaven; tranſmit your ſweet and winning invitations to my heart. Attract, and refine, all my affections. Withhold them from ſtagnating, on the ſordid ſhores of fleſh; never ſuffer them to ſettle upon the lees of ſenſe; but impreſs them with emotions of reſtleſs deſire, after ſublime and celeſtial joys.——Joys, that will proceed on in one everlaſting flow, when ſeas ſhall

ceaſe to roll:——Joys, that will charm every faculty with unimaginable pleaſure; when the moon, with her waxing ſplendors, ſhall chear our ſight no more.

Enough for the preſent evening. My thoughts have been ſufficiently exerciſed, and my ſteps begin to be attended with wearineſs. Let me obey the admonition of nature; and give reſpite to my meditations, ſlumber to my eyes.—But ſtay.—— Shall I retire to the bed of ſleep, with as little ceremony, and with as much inattention, as the brutes to their ſordid lair? Are no acknowledgments due to that Divine Being, who has been the ſupport of my life, and the length of my days?——Have I no farther need of his protecting care; no more occaſion for the bleſſings of his goodneſs?—Lepidus, perhaps, may laugh at the bended knee; and have a thouſand darts of raillery, ready to be diſcharged on the practice of devotion. The wits, I know, are unmercifully ſevere on, what they call, the drudgery of prayer, and the fantaſtic rant of praiſe. Theſe they leave to the illiterate labourer, and mean mechanic, or treat them, with a contemptuous ſneer, as the parſon's ignoble trade.

Is it then an inſtance of ſuperſtitious blindneſs, to diſtinguiſh, or of whimſical zeal, to celebrate, the moſt ſuper-eminent merit? Is it an ungrateful buſineſs; or does it argue a growling diſpoſition; to magnify goodneſs, tranſcendently rich and diffuſive? Is it only for the inferior herd, to admire the moſt conſummate excellence; only for puſillanimous creatures, to maintain an affiance on Almighty Power?—What can be ſo truly becoming a dependent ſtate, as to pay our adoring homage, to the fountain of perfection; and profeſs our devoted allegiance, to the ſupreme Governor of the Univerſe? Can any thing more ſignificantly beſpeak an ingenious temper; or adminiſter a more real ſatisfaction to its fineſt feelings; than the

exerciſes

exercises of penitential piety? by which we give vent to an honest anguish; or melt into filial sorrow; for our insensibility to the best of friends, for our disobedience to the best of parents?—In a word; can there be a more sublime pleasure, than to dwell, in fixed contemplation, on the beauties of the eternal mind; the amiable author of all that is fair, grand, and harmonious; the beneficent giver of all that is convenient, comfortable, and useful? Can there be a more advantageous employ, than to present our request to the Father of mercies; opening our minds to the irradiations of his wisdom, and all the faculties of our souls to the communications of his grace?—It is strange, unaccountably strange, that the notion of dignity in sentiment, and the pursuit of refined enjoyment, should ever be disunited from Devotion. That persons, who make pretensions to an improved taste, an exalted genius, should neglect this most ennobling intercourse, with the wisest and best of Beings; the inexhaustible spring of honour and joy.

Shall I be deterred, from approaching this source of the purest delight? Deterred, from pursuing this highest improvement of my nature? Deterred from all, by a formidable banter; or confuted, by one irrefragable smile?——No: let the moon, in her resplendent sphere; and yonder pole, with all its starry train, witness, if I be silent even or morn. If I refrain to kindle in my heart, and breathe from my lips, the reasonable incense of praise. Praise to that great and glorious God, who formed the earth, and built the skies; who poured from his hand the watry world, and breathed the all-surrounding air abroad.—"Thou also madest the night, Maker omnipotent! and thou, the day! which I, though less then the least of all thy mercies, have passed in safety, tranquillity, and comfort.—When I was lost in the extravagance of dreams, or lay immersed in the insensibility of sleep; thy hand

recovered me from the temporary lethargy, and ſtrung my limbs with recruited vigour: thy hand ſet a new, a delicately fine edge, on all my blunted ſenſes: and awakened my thoughts, when benumbed, into alacrity; reduced them, when diſconcerted, into order: refitting me, at once to diſcharge the duties of my ſtation; to reliſh the innocent entertainments of an animal, and to enjoy the ſublime gratifications of a rational capacity. —When darkneſs covered the face of the creation, at thy command, the ſun aroſe, and darted its beams; painted the flowers and diſtinguiſhed every object; gave light to my feet, gave direction to my hands, and gave nature, with all her beautiful ſcenes, to my eye.——To Thee, O Thou God of my life, I owe the continuance of my being, and the vivacity of my conſtitution. By thy ſacred order, without any conſciouſneſs of mine, the wheels of nature move within me, and the vital fountain plays. Impelled by thy power, the crimſon current flows through innumerable channels; and never once miſſes its way; never once is interrupted in its courſe; when a ſmall obſtruction might be diſeaſe; or the burſting of a ſingle artery, death. Overruled by thy exquiſite ſkill, it transforms itſelf, by the niceſt operations of an inexplicable kind of chemiſtry, into a variety of the fineſt ſecretions: which glide into the muſcles, and ſwell them for action; or pour themſelves into the fluids, and repair their inceſſant decays: which cauſe chearfulneſs to ſparkle in the eye, and health to bloom in the cheek.

" Disastrous accidents, injurious to the peace of mind, or fatal to the welfare of my body, beſet my paths, in formidable ambuſh. But thy faithfulneſs, and truth, like an impenetrable ſhield, covered my head, and guarded me all around. Under this divine protection, I walked ſecure, amidſt legions of apparent perils; and paſſed unhurt,

hurt, through an unknown multiplicity of unſeen evils. Not one of my bones was broken; nor a ſingle ſhaft grazed upon my eaſe; even when the eye, that watched over me, ſaw, in its wide ſurvey, thouſands falling beſide me, in irrecoverable ruin; and ten thouſands deeply wounded by the arrows, that flew on my right-hand—If ſickneſs has, at any time, viſited my chamber, or pain harrowed my fleſh; it was a wholeſome diſcipline, and a gracious ſeverity. The chaſtiſement proved a ſovereign medicine, to cure me of an immoderate fondneſs, for this imperfect troubleſome ſtate; and to quicken my deſires, after the unimbittered enjoyments of eternity.—Has not thy munificence, unwearied and unbounded, ſpread my table; and furniſhed it, with the fineſt wheat; repleniſhed it, with marrow and fatneſs? While temperance ſweetened the bowl; appetite ſeaſoned the diſh: content and gratitude crowned the repaſt.—Has not thy kindneſs, O God of the families of Iſrael, preſerved my affectionate " Relations; who ſtudy, by their tender Offices, " to ſoften every care, and heighten every joy; and " given me valuable Friends, whoſe preſence is a " cordial, to chear me in a dejected hour; and whoſe " converſation mingles improvement with delight?

" When Sin lay lurking, amidſt flowery ſcenes " of pleaſure; enlightened by thy Wiſdom, I diſ- " cerned the latent miſchief; made reſolute by thy " grace, I ſhunned the luſcious bane. If, through " the impulſe of ſenſuality, or the the violence of " paſſion, I have been hurried into the ſnare, and " ſtung by the ſerpent; thy faithful admonitions " have recalled the fooliſh wanderer! While the " Blood of thy Son has healed his deadly wounds. " Some, perhaps, have been cut off in the midſt of " their Iniquities; and, to their inexpreſſible aſto- " niſhment, tranſmitted from their Thrillings of " polluted joy, to the agonies of eternal deſpair: " whereas, I have been diſtinguiſhed by long-ſuf-

" fering

" fering mercy; and, inſtead of lifting up my eyes,
" in torments, to behold a Heaven irrecoverably
" loſt; I may lift them up under the pleaſing views
" of being admitted, ere-long, into thoſe Abodes
" of unutterable felicity.—In the mean time, thou
" haſt vouchſafed me the Revelation of thy will;
" the influences of thy Spirit; and abundance of
" the moſt effectual aids, for advancing in know-
" ledge, and growing in godlineſs; for becoming
" more conformable to thy image, and more meet
" for thy preſence; for taſting the ſacred pleaſures
" of religion, and ſecuring the unſearchable riches
" of Heaven.

" How various is thy Beneficence, O Thou Lover
" of ſouls! It has unſealed a thouſand ſources of
" good; opened a thouſand avenues of delight;
" and heaped bleſſings upon me, with a ceaſeleſs
" liberality. If I ſhould attempt to declare them;
" they would be more than the Stars, which glitter
" in this unclouded ſky; more than the dewy gems,
" which will adorn the Face of the morning.

" And ſhall I forget the GOD of my ſalvation,
" the author of all my mercies? Rather let my pulſe
" forget to beat!—Shall I render him no expreſſions
" of thankfulneſs? Then might all nature reproach
" my ingratitude.—Shall I reſt ſatisfied with the
" bare acknowledgment of my lips. No: let my life
" be vocal, and ſpeak his praiſe, in that only
" genuine, that moſt emphatical language———
" the language of devout obedience. Let the bill
" be drawn upon my very heart; let all my affec-
" tions acknowledge the draught; and let the whole
" tenor of my actions, in time, and through Eter-
" nity, be continually paying the debt——the
" mighty debt of duty, veneration, and love.

" And can I, O Thou Guide of my goings,
" and Guardian of all my intereſts—can I diſtruſt
" ſuch ſignal, ſuch experienced Goodneſs? Thou

" haſt

" haſt been my helper, thro' all the buſy ſcenes of
" Day: therefore under the Shadow of thy Wings
" will I repoſe myſelf, during the Darkneſs, the
" danger, and death-like inactivity of the Night.
" Whatever defilement I have contracted, waſh it
" thoroughly away, in redeeming Blood; and let
" neither the ſinful Stain, nor the ſinful Inclination,
" accompany me to my Couch!——Then, ſhall
" I lay me down in peace, and take my reſt; chear-
" fully referring it to thy all-wiſe Determination,
" whether I ſhall open my Eyes in this World, or
" awake in the unknown Regions of another".

THE END.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

STARRY HEAVENS.

There dwells a noble Pathos *in the Skies,*
Which warms our Paſſions, proſelytes our Hearts:
How eloquently ſhines *the glowing Pole!*
With what Authority it gives its Charge,
Remonſtrating great Truths *in Stile ſublime!*

Night-Thoughts, No. IX.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

STARRY HEAVENS.

THIS Evening, I exchange the nice Retreats of Art, for the noble Theatre of Nature. Inſtead of meaſuring my ſteps, under the covert of an arbour; let me range along the Summit of this gently-riſing Hill.——There is no need of the leaſy Shade, ſince the ſun has quitted the horizon, and withdrawn his ſcorching beams. But ſee, how advantages and inconveniencies are uſually linked, and chequer our affairs below! If the annoying heat ceaſes, the Landſcape, and its pleaſing ſcenes, are alſo removed.——The majeſtic Caſtle, and the lowly cottage are vaniſhed together. I have loſt the aſpiring mountain, and its ruſſet brow; I look round, but to no purpoſe, for the humble vale, and its flowery lap. The plains whitened with Flocks, and the Heath, yellow with furze, diſappear. The advancing Night has wrapt in Darkneſs the long-extended Foreſt; and drawn her Mantle, over the windings of the ſilver Stream: I no longer behold the luxuriant Fertility in the Fields; that wild magnificence of proſpect, and endleſs variety of Images; which have ſo often touched me with delight, and ſtruck me with Awe, from this commanding Eminence.

THE Loſs, however, is ſcarcely to be regretted; ſince it is amply compenſated by the opening Beauties of the Sky. Here, I enjoy a free view of the whole hemiſphere; without any obſtacle from below, to confine the exploring Eye; or any Cloud from above, to overcaſt the ſpacious concave. 'Tis

true,

true, the lively Vermillion, which ſo lately ſtreaked the chambers of the Weſt, is all faded: But the Planets, one after another, light up their Lamps; the Stars advance in their glittering train; a thouſand and a thouſand luminaries ſhine forth in ſucceſſive ſplendors; and the whole Firmament is kindling into the moſt beautiful glow. The Blueneſs of the Æther, heightened by the ſeaſon of the Year, and ſtill more enlivened by the Abſence of the Moon, gives thoſe Gems of Heaven the ſtrongeſt Luſtre.

One Pleaſure more the invading gloom has not been able to ſnatch, from my ſenſe. The Night rather improves, than deſtroys, the fragrance which exhales from the blooming Beams. With theſe, the ſides of this ſloping Declivity are lined; and with theſe, the balmy Zephyrs perfume their wings. Does Arabia, from all her ſpicy groves, breathe a more liberal, or a more charming gale of Sweets? And, what is a peculiar recommendation of the rural Entertainments, preſented in our happy Land, they are alloyed by no apprehenſions of danger. No poiſonous Serpent lurks under the Bloſſom; nor any ravenous Beaſt lies ready to ſtart from the thicket.—But, I wander from a far more exalted ſubject. My thoughts, like my affections, are too eaſily diverted from the Heavens, and detained by inferior objects. Away, my attention, from theſe little blandiſhments of the Earth; ſince all the glories of the Sky invite thy Regard.

We have taken a turn amongſt the Tombs, and viewed the ſolemn memorials of the Dead; in order to learn the vanity of mortal things, and to break their ſoft Inchantment.—We have ſurveyed the ornaments of the Garden; not that the Heart might be planted in the parterre, or take root among the flowery race: but that theſe delicacies of a day might teach us to aſpire after a better paradiſe, where

where beauty never fades, and delight is ever in the bloom.—A third time we lighted the candle of meditation; and ſought for wiſdom, not in the crouded city, or wrangling ſchools, but in the ſilent and lonely walks of antient night *.— Let us once more indulge the contemplative vein, and raiſe our ſpeculations to thoſe ſublimer works of the great Creator; which the regions of the ſky contain, and this duſky hour unveils †.

If we have diſcerned the touches of his pencil, glowing in the colours of Spring; if we have ſeen a ſample of his beneficence, exhibited in the ſtores of nature; and a ray of his brightneſs, beaming in the blaze of day; O! what an infinitely richer field for the diſplay of his perfection are the Heavens! the Heavens, in the moſt emphatical manner, declare the glory of God. The Heavens are nobly eloquent of the Deity, and the moſt magnificent Heralds of their Maker's praiſe. They ſpeak to the whole univerſe; for there is neither ſpeech ſo barbarous, but their language is underſtood; nor nation ſo diſtant, but their voices are heard among them ‡.—Let me then, while multitudes are buried in ſleep, liſten to their ſilent lectures. Perhaps, I may receive ſuch impreſſive manifeſtations of "the eternal power and Godhead," as may ſhed religion on my ſoul, while I walk the ſolitary ſhades; and may be a tutelary friend to my virtue, when the call of buſineſs, and the return of light, expoſe me again to the inroads of temptation.

The

* Alluding to the ſeveral ſubjects of the three preceding eſſays.

† Night opes the nobleſt ſcenes, and ſheds an awe,
Which gives thoſe venerable ſcenes full weight,
And deep reception in the entender'd heart.
Night-Thoughts, No. IX.

‡ Pſal. xix. 3.

THE Iſraelites, inſtigated by phrenzy, rather than devotion, worſhipped the Hoſt of Heaven. And the pretenders to judicial aſtrology talk of, I know not what, myſterious efficacy; in the different aſpect of the ſtars, or the various conjunction and oppoſition of the planets.——Let thoſe, who are unacquainted with the ſure word of revelation, give ear to theſe ſons of deluſion, and dealers in deceit: for my part, it is matter of indifference to me, whether the conſtellations ſhone with ſmiles, or loured in frowns, on the hour of my nativity. Let CHRIST be my guard; and, ſecure in ſuch a protection, I would laugh at their impotent menaces. Let CHRIST be my guide; and I ſhall ſcorn to aſk, as well as deſpair of receiving, any predictive information from ſuch lifeleſs maſſes.—What! ſhall "the living ſeek to the dead *?" Can theſe bodies advertiſe me of future events, which are unconſcious of their own exiſtence? ſhall I have recourſe to unintelligent, ſtupid matter, when I may apply to that all-wiſe Being; who, with one comprehenſive glance, diſtinctly views whatever is lodged in the boſom of immenſity, or forming in the womb of futurity?——Never will I ſearch for any intimations of my fate; but often trace my Creator's footſteps †, in yonder ſtarry plains. In the

* Iſai. viii. 19.

† "It is moſt becoming (ſays a great Author) ſuch imperfect creatures as we are, to contemplate the works of GOD, with this deſign, that we may diſcern the manifeſtations of wiſdom in them; and thereby excite in ourſelves thoſe devout affections, and that ſuperlative reſpect, which is the very eſſence of praiſe, as it is a reaſonable and moral ſervice."—"Abernethy on the Attributes."———And, indeed, if we are ſincerely diſpoſed to employ ourſelves in this excellent, this comprehenſive duty, of praiſing the infinite Creator; the means and the motives are both at hand. His works, in a wonderful and inſtructive variety, preſent themſelves; with pregnant

the former caſe, they would be teachers of lies; in the latter, they are oracles of truth. In this therefore, this ſenſe only, I profeſs myſelf the pupil of the ſtars.

THE vulgar are apprehenſive of nothing more, than a multitude of bright Spangles, dropt over the ætherial blue. They have no higher notion of theſe fine appearances, than that they are ſo many golden Studs, with which the Empyrean Arch is decorated. —But ſtudious minds, that carry a more accurate and ſtrict inquiry among the celeſtial bodies, bring back advices of a moſt aſtoniſhing import. Let me juſt recollect the moſt material of thoſe ſtupendous diſcoveries; in order to furniſh out proper ſubjects for our contemplation. And let the unlearned remember, That the ſcene I am going to diſplay, is the workmanſhip of that incomprehenſible GOD, who is "perfect in knowledge, and mighty in power:" whoſe name, whoſe nature, and all whoſe operations, are "great and marvellous:" who ſummons into being, with equal eaſe, a ſingle grain, or ten thouſand worlds.—To this, if we continually advert, the aſſertions, though they will certainly excite our admiration, need not tranſcend our belief.

THE earth, is, in fact, a round body; however it may ſeem, in ſome parts, to be ſunk into vales, and raiſed into hills *; in other parts, to be ſpread into

pregnant manifeſtations, of the moſt tranſcendent excellencies of their Maker. They pour their evidence from all quarters, and into all the avenues of the mind. They invite us, eſpecially in the magnificent ſyſtem of the univerſe, to contemplate—Counſel, conſummately wiſe; and Execution, inimitably perfect:—Power, to which nothing is impoſſible; and Goodneſs, which extendeth to all, which endureth for ever.—To give, not a full diſplay, but only ſome ſlight ſtrictures, of theſe glorious truths, is the principal ſcope of the following remarks.

* A learned writer, I think, Dr. Derham, has ſomewhere an obſervation to this purpoſe.—That the loftieſt ſummits of hills,

into a ſpacious plain, extending to the confines of the Heavens or terminated by the waters of the ocean. ——We may fancy, that it has deep foundations, and reſts upon ſome prodigiouſly ſolid baſis: but it is pendent, in the wide tranſpicuous æther; without any viſible cauſe, to uphold it from above, or ſupport it from beneath.—It may ſeem to be ſedentary in its attitude, and motionleſs in its ſituation: but it is continually ſailing †, thro' the depths of the ſky; and, in the ſpace of twelve months, finiſhes the mighty voyage. Which periodical rotation produces the ſeaſons, and completes the year. —As it proceeds in the annual circuit, it ſpins upon its own centre; and turns its ſides, alternately, to the fountain of light. By which means, the day dawns in one hemiſphere; while the night ſucceeds in the other. Without this expedient, one part of its region would, during half the great revolution, be ſcorched with exceſſive heat, or languiſh under an un-intermitted glare: while the other, expoſed to the contrary extremes, would be frozen to ice, and buried under a long oppreſſion of diſmal and deſtructive darkneſs.

I CANNOT forbear taking notice; that, in this compound motion of the earth, the one in no wiſe interferes

hills, and the moſt enormous ridges of mountains, are no real objection to the globular form of the earth. Becauſe, however they may render it, to our limited ſight, vaſtly uneven and protuberant; yet they bear no more proportion to the intire ſurface of the terraqueous ball, than a particle of duſt, caſually dropt on the Mathematician's globe, bears to its whole circumference. Conſequently, the rotund figure is no more deſtroyed in the one caſe, than in the other.——On the ſame principal, I have not thought it neceſſary, to take any notice of the comparatively ſmall difference, between the Polar and Equatorial diameter of the earth.

† With what amazing ſpeed, this veſſel [if I may carry on the alluſion,] filled with a multitude of nations, and freighted with all their poſſeſſions, makes her way thro' the Ætherial ſpace; ſee page 114, in note.

interferes with the other, but both are perfectly compatible.——Is it not thus, with the precepts of religion, and the needful affairs of the preſent life; not excepting even the innocent gratifications of our appetites?——Some, I believe, are apt to imagine, that they muſt renounce ſociety, if they devote themſelves to CHRIST; and abandon all the ſatisfaction of this world, if they once become zealous candidates for the felicity of another.——But this is a very miſtaken notion, or elſe a very injurious repreſentation, of the doctrine which is according to godlineſs. It was never intended to drive men into deſarts; but to lead them, through the peaceful and pleaſant paths of wiſdom, into the bliſsful regions of life eternal. It was never intended to ſtrike off the wheels of buſineſs, or cut in ſunder the ſinews of induſtry; but rather, to make men induſtrious from a principle of conſcience, not from the inſtigations of avarice; that ſo, they may promote their immortal happineſs, even while they provide for their temporal maintenance. It has no deſign to extirpate our paſſions, but only to reſtrain their irregularities; neither would it damp the delights of ſenſe, but prevent them from evaporating into vanity, and ſubſiding into gall.——A perſon may be chearful among his friends, and yet joyful in GOD. He may taſte the ſweets of his earthly eſtate; and, at the ſame time, cheriſh his hopes of a nobler inheritance in heaven. The trader may proſecute the demand of commerce, without neglecting to negotiate the affairs of his ſalvation. The warrior may wear his ſword; may draw, in a juſt cauſe, that murderous weapon; and yet be a good ſoldier of JESUS CHRIST, and obtain the crown that fadeth not away. The parent may lay up a competent portion for his children, and not forfeit his title to the treaſures, either of grace or glory.—So far is chriſtianity, from obſtructing any valuable intereſt, or with-holding any real pleaſure;

that it evidently advances the one, and improves the other. Juſt as the diurnal and annual motions are ſo far from claſhing, that they perfectly accord; and, inſtead of being deſtructive of each other, by mutually blending their effects, they give proportion and harmony to time, fertility and innumerable benefits, to nature.

To us that dwell on its ſurface, the earth is by far the moſt extenſive orb; that our eyes can, any where, behold. It is alſo cloathed with verdure; diſtinguiſhed by trees; and adorned with a variety of beautiful decorations. Whereas, to a ſpectator placed on one of the planets, it wears an uniform aſpect; looks all luminous, and no larger than a ſpot. To beings, who dwell at ſtill greater diſtances, it intirely diſappears.——That which we call, alternately, the morning, or the evening-ſtar; as, in one part of her orbit, ſhe rides foremoſt in the proceſſion of night; in the other, uſhers in and anticipates the dawn; is a planetary world. Which with the four others, that ſo wonderfully vary their myſtic dance, are in themſelves dark bodies, and ſhine only by reflection: have fields, and ſeas, and ſkies of their own: are furniſhed with all accommodations for animal ſubſiſtence; and are ſuppoſed to be the abodes of intellectual life. All which, together with this our earthly habitation, are dependent on that grand diſpenſer of divine munificence, the ſun; receive their light from the diſtribution of his rays, and derive their comforts from his benign agency.

The ſun, that ſeems to perform its daily ſtages through the ſky, is, in this reſpect *, fixed and unmoveable. 'Tis the great axle of heaven, about which the globe we inhabit, and other more ſpacious orbs, wheel their ſtated courſes.——The ſun, though

* I ſay, in this reſpect; that I may not ſeem to forget, or exclude, the revolution of the ſun round its own axis.

though ſeemingly ſmaller than the dial it illuminates, is abundantly larger † than this whole earth; on which ſo many lofty mountains riſe, and ſuch vaſt oceans roll. A line, extending from ſide to ſide, through the centre of that reſplendent orb, would meaſure more than eight hundred thouſand miles: a girdle, formed to go round its circumference, would require a length of millions: and, were its ſolid contents to be computed, the account would even confound our underſtanding, and be almoſt beyond the power of language to expreſs §. ——Are we ſtartled at theſe reports of philoſophy? Are we ready to cry out, in a tranſport of ſurprize; how mighty is the Being, who kindled ſuch a prodigious fire, and keeps alive, from age to age, ſuch an enormous maſs of flame?—Let us attend our philoſophic guides, and we ſhall be brought acquainted with ſpeculations, incomparably more enlarged and amazing.

THIS ſun, with all its attendant planets, is but a very little part of the grand machine of the univerſe. Every ſtar, though in appearance no bigger than a diamond, that glitters upon a lady's ring; is really a vaſt globe, like the ſun in ſize, and in glory; no leſs ſpacious, no leſs luminous, than the radiant ſource of our day. So that every ſtar is, not barely a world, but the centre of a magnificent ſyſtem; has a retinue of worlds, irradiated by its beams, and revolving round its attractive

 influence.

† A hundred thouſand times, according to the loweſt reckoning. Sir Iſaac Newton computes the ſun to be 900,000 times bigger than the earth. Relig. Philoſ. p. 749.

§ Dr. Derham, after having calculated the dimenſion of the planets, adds, "Amazing as theſe maſſes are, they are all far outdone by that ſtupendous globe of light, the ſun; which, as it is the fountain of light and heat, to all the planets about it, ſo doth it far ſurpaſs them all in its bulk, its apparent diameter being computed at 822,148 Engliſh miles, its ambit at 2,582,873 miles, and its ſolid contents at 290,971,000,000,000,000." Aſtro. Theol. Book I. Chap. II.

influence. All which are loſt, to our ſight, in unmeaſureable wilds of æther.—That the ſtars appear like ſo many diminutive, and ſcarce diſtinguiſhable points, is owing to their immenſe, and inconceivable diſtance. Immenſe and inconceivable indeed it is; ſince a ball, ſhot from the loaded cannon, and flying with unabated rapidity, muſt travel at this impetuous rate, almoſt ſeven hundred thouſand years *, before it could reach the neareſt of thoſe twinkling luminaries.

CAN any thing be more wonderful, than theſe obſervations? Yes: There are truths, far more ſtupendous; there are ſcenes, far more unbounded. As there is no end of the Almighty Maker's greatneſs; ſo no imagination can ſet limits to his creating hand.——Could you ſoar beyond the moon, and paſs through all the planetary choir: could you wing your way to the higheſt apparent ſtar, and take your ſtand on one of thoſe loftieſt pinnacles of heaven: you would, there, ſee other ſkies expanded; another ſun, diſtributing his inexhauſtible beams by day; other ſtars, that gild the horrors of the alternate night: and other †, perhaps nobler ſyſtems, eſtabliſhed; eſtabliſhed, in unknown profuſion, thro' the boundleſs dimenſions of ſpace.—Nor does the dominion of the great Sovereign terminate there. Even at the end of this vaſt tour, you would find yourſelf advanced no farther, than the ſuburbs

* See Religious Philoſopher, p. 819.—Where the exact computation is 691,600 years.

† See Aſtro-Theology, Book II. Chap. II.—Where the Author having aſſigned various reaſons to ſupport this theory of our modern aſtronomers, adds—"Beſides (the forementioned) ſtrong probabilities, we have this farther recommendation of ſuch an account of the univerſe, that it is far more magnificent, and worthy of the infinite Creator, than any other of the narrower ſchemes."

ſuburbs of creation; arrived only at the frontiers of the great JEHOVAH's kingdom *.

ARE we ſtruck with amazement, at this little ſketch of a very little part of his works? How then muſt we be loſt in wonder, at the conſideration of the Creator himſelf! Who is ſo high, that he looks down on the higheſt of theſe dazzling ſpheres, and ſees even the ſummit of creation in a vale: ſo great, that this prodigious extent of ſpace, is but a point in his preſence; and all this confluence of worlds, as the lighteſt atom, that fluctuates in air, and diſports in the meridian ray §.

O! THOU

* Job, after a moſt ſublime diſſertation, on the mighty works of God; as they are ſcattered through univerſal nature, from the heights of heaven, to the very depths of hell; cloſes the magnificent account with this noble acknowledgment; 'Lo! theſe are parts of his ways,' Or, as the original word more literally ſignifies; and may, I think, be more elegantly rendered; 'Theſe are only the ſkirts, the very outermoſt Borders, of his works; no more than a ſmall preface to the immenſe volume of the creation.——From the Hebrew קצות——*Extremitates*——I cannot forbear thinking, on the extreme and very attenuated fibres of the root, when compared with the whole ſubſtance of the trunk; or on the exquiſitely ſmall ſize of the capillary veſſels, when compared with the whole ſtructure of the body. Job xxvi. 14.

§ This puts me in mind of a very fine remark on a ſcriptural beauty; and a ſolid correction of the common tranſlation; made by that learned, ſagacious, and devout expoſitor, Vitringa.—Iſa. xl. 15. We find it written of the Supreme Being, That 'he taketh up the iſles, as a very little thing.' Which, our critic obſerves, is neither anſwerable to the import of the original, nor conſonant to the ſtructure of the diſcourſe. The prophet had no intention to inform mankind, what the Almighty could do, with regard to the iſlands, if he pleaſed to exert his power: But his deſign was to ſhew, how inſignificant, or rather what mere nothings they are, in his eſteem, and before his Majeſty.—The Iſlands, ſays he, though ſo ſpacious, as to afford room for the erection of kingdoms, and the abode of nations; though ſo ſtrong, as to withſtand, for many thouſands of years, the raging and reiterated aſſaults of the

O! THOU ſublime and incomprehenſibly glorious GOD, how am I overwhelmed with awe, and ſunk into the loweſt proſtration of mind; when I conſider thy "excellent greatneſs," together with my own littleneſs and inſignificancy!——Is there not moſt abundant reaſon, to be even confounded at the remembrance; that, exceſſively mean as I am, I ſhould ever entertain one conceited apprehenſion of myſelf? ſhould feel the leaſt elatement of thought, in the preſence of ſo majeſtic and adorable a Being?——Were I poſſeſſed of all the high perfections, that accompliſh and adorn the angels of light; yet, amidſt all theſe noble endowments, I would fall down in the deepeſt abaſement at thy feet. Loſt in the infinitely ſuperior blaze, of thy uncreated glories; I would confeſs myſelf to be leſs than nothing, and vanity.—How much more ought I to maintain the moſt unfeigned humiliation, before thy divine Majeſty; who am not only duſt and aſhes, but a compound of imperfection and depravity.

WHILE beholding this vaſt expanſe, I learn my own extreme meanneſs; I would alſo diſcover the abject littleneſs, which is in all terreſtrial things. ——What is the earth, with all her oſtentatious ſcenes, compared with this aſtoniſhing furniture of the ſkies? What, but a dim ſpeck, hardly perceivable in the map of the univerſe? It is obſerved, by a very judicious writer *, that if the ſun himſelf, which enlightens this part of the creation, was

the whole watery world; are yet, before the adored Jehovah, ſmall as the minuteſt grain, which the eye can ſcarce diſcern; light as the feathered mote, which the leaſt breath hurries away like a tempeſt.——אִיִּים כִּדְקּ יִטּוֹל Inſulæ ſunt et leve quod avolat. The deep-rooted iſlands are as the volatile atom, which by the gentleſt undulation of the air is wafted to and fro in perpetual agitation."

* Spect. Vol. VIII. No. 565.

was extinguiſhed; and all the hoſt of planetary worlds, that move about him, were annihilated; they would not be miſſed, by an eye that can take in the whole compaſs of nature, any more than a grain of ſand upon the ſea-ſhore. The bulk of which they conſiſt, and the ſpace which they occupy, is ſo exceedingly little in compariſon of the whole; that their loſs would ſcarce leave a blank in the immenſity of God's works.——If, then, not our globe only, but this whole ſyſtem, be ſo very diminutive; what is a kingdom or a country? What are a few Lordſhips, or the ſo much admired patrimonies of thoſe, who are ſtiled wealthy †? When I meaſure them with my own little pittance, they ſwell into enormous dimenſions. But, when I take the boundleſs univerſe for my ſtandard, how ſcanty is their ſize, how contemptible their figure! They ſhrink into proud and pompous nothings ‡.

When the keen-eyed eagle ſoars above all the feathered race, and leaves their very ſight below: when ſhe winds her towering way up the ſteep of heaven; and ſteadily gazing on the meridian ſun, accounts its beaming ſplendors all her own: Does ſhe then regard, with any ſolicitude, the mote that is flying in the air, or the duſt which ſhe ſhook from her feet? And ſhall this eternal mind of mine, which is capable of contemplating its Creator's glory; which is intended to enjoy the viſions of his countenance? ſhall this eternal mind, endued with ſuch great capacities; and made for ſuch exalted ends, be ſo ignobly ambitious, as to ſigh for the tinſels of ſtate; or ſo poorly covetous, as to graſp after ample territories on a needle's point?—O! no: While ſuch my conſiderations, I feel my ſentiments

† "Juvat inter ſidera vagantem divitum pavimenta ridere, & totam cum auro ſuo terram." Seneca.

‡ "Terrellæ grandia inania." Watt's Hor. Lyr.

ments expand, and my wiſhes acquire a turn of ſublimity. Such vaſt ſurveys aſſimilate the ſoul, and make her truly great. My throbbing deſires after worldly grandeur die away; and I find myſelf, if not poſſeſſed of power, yet ſuperior to its charms.——Too long, muſt I own, have my affections been pinioned by vanity, and immured in this earthly clod. But theſe thoughts break the ſhackles *. Theſe objects open the door of liberty: My heart, fired by ſuch noble proſpects, weighs anchor from this little nook; and coaſts no longer about its contracted ſhores; doats no longer on its painted ſhells. The immenſity of things is her range; and an infinity of bliſs is her aim.

Behold this immenſe expanſe, and admire the condeſcenſion of thy God.——In this manner, an inſpired and princely aſtronomer improved his ſurvey of the nocturnal heavens. When I conſider thy heavens, even the works of thy fingers, the moon and the ſtars which thou haſt ordained; I am ſmitten with wonder at thy glory, and cry out in a tranſport of gratitude, Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the ſon of man, that thou viſiteſt him †? "How amazing, how charming, is that divine grace, which is pleaſed to bow down its ſacred regards, to ſo fooliſh and worthleſs a creature! Yea, diſdains not from the height of infinite exaltation, to extend its kind providential care, to our moſt minute concerns!—But, that the everlaſting ſovereign ſhould give his Son, to be our incarnate Saviour; what a miracle is this of condeſcending

* The ſoul of man was made to walk the ſkies.
Delightful outlet of her priſon here!
There, diſincumber'd from her chains, the ties
Of toys terreſtrial, ſhe can rove at large;
There freely can reſpire, dilate, extend,
In full proportion let looſe all her powers.
Night-Thoughts, No. IX.

† Pſal. viii. 3, 4.

condeſcending goodneſs! Or rather, what are all miracles, what are all myſteries, to this ineffable gift!"

Had the brighteſt Archangel been commiſſioned to come down, with the olive-branch of peace in his hand; and to ſignify his eternal Maker's readineſs to be reconciled; on our bended knees, with tears of joy, and a torrent of thankfulneſs, we ought to have received the tranſporting news. But when, inſtead of ſuch an angelic envoy, he ſends His only begotten Son; his Son beyond all thought illuſtrious, to make us the gracious Overture:——ſends him from the "Habitation of his Holineſs and Glory," to put on all the innocent infirmities of mortality, and dwell in a tabernacle of clay:——ſends him, not barely to make us a tranſient viſit, but to abide many years in our inferior and miſerable world:—ſends him, not to exerciſe dominion over monarchs, but to wear out his life in the ignoble form of a ſervant; and, at laſt, to make his Exit under the infamous character of a malefactor! Was ever love like this? Did ever grace ſtoop ſo low *?—Should the ſun be ſhorn of all his radiant honours,

* This reminds me of a very noble piece of ſacred Oratory, where, in a fine ſeries of the moſt beautiful gradations, the apoſtle diſplays the admirably condeſcending kindneſs of our Saviour.——"He thought it no robbery," it was his indiſputable right, to be equal with the infinite, ſelf-exiſtent, immortal God. Yet, in mercy to ſinners, He emptied himſelf of the incommunicable honours, and laid aſide the robes of incomprehenſible glory.—When he entered upon his mediatorial ſtate, inſtead of acting in the grand capacity of univerſal ſovereign, He took upon him the form of a ſervant. And not the form of thoſe miniſtering ſpirits, whoſe duty is dignity itſelf; who are throned, though adoring.——He took not on him the nature of angels, but ſtooped incomparably lower. Aſſumed a body of animated duſt, and was made in the likeneſs of men; thoſe inferior and depraved creatures. —Aſtoniſhing condeſcenſion! but not ſufficient for the overflowing

honours, and degraded into a cloud of the vallies; ſhould all the dignitaries of heaven be depoſed from their thrones, and degenerate into inſects of a day; great, great would be the abaſement. But nothing to thine, moſt bleſſed Jeſus; nothing to thine, thou Prince of Peace; when for us men and for our ſalvation, Thou didſt not abhor the coarſe accommodations of the manger; Thou didſt not decline even the gloomy horrors of the grave.

'Tis well, the ſacred oracles have given this doctrine, the moſt reiterated and inconteſtable evidence. Otherwiſe, ſo prodigious a favour muſt ſtagger our belief.——Could He, who launches all theſe planetary globes thro' the illimitable void; and leads them on, from age to age, in their extenſive career; could He reſign his hands, to be confined by the girding cord; and his back to be plowed by the bloody ſcourge?—Could He, who crowns all the ſtars with inextinguiſhable brightneſs; be himſelf defiled with ſpitting, and disfigured with the thorny ſcar? It is the greateſt of wonders, and yet the ſureſt of truths.

O! Ye mighty orbs, that roll along the ſpaces of the ſky; I wondered, a little while ago, at your vaſt dimenſions, and ample circuits: But now my amazement ceaſes; or rather, is intirely ſwallowed up by a much more ſtupendous ſubject. Methinks your

flowing richneſs of the Redeemer's love. For being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf farther ſtill; occupied the loweſt place, where all was low and ignoble. He not only ſubmitted to the yoke of the divine law, but alſo bore the infirmities, and miniſtered to the neceſſities of mortals. He even waſhed the feet of others, and had not where to lay his own head.—Yea, he carried his meritorious humiliation to the very deepeſt degrees of poſſible abaſement. He became obedient unto death—And not to a common or natural death, but a death more infamous than the gibbet; more torturous than the rack—even the accurſed death of the croſs. Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

your enormous bulk is ſhrivelled to an atom; your prodigious revolutions are contracted to a ſpan; while I muſe upon the far more elevated heights, and unfathomable depths; the infinitely more extended lengths, and unlimited breadths, of this love of God in Chriſt Jeſus §.

While I behold this vaſt expanſe, I ſee a mirror, that repreſents, in the moſt awful colours, the greatneſs of the Creator's glory, and the heinouſneſs of human guilt.—Ten thouſand volumes, wrote on purpoſe to diſplay the aggravations of my various acts of diſobedience, could not ſo effectually convince me of their inconceivable enormity, as the conſideration of that all-glorious perſon †; who to make an atonement for them, ſpilt the laſt drop of his blood.———I have ſinned, may every child of Adam ſay; and what ſhall I do unto thee, O thou obſerver of men ‡? Shall I give my firſt-born for my tranſgreſſion, the fruit of my body for the ſin of my ſoul: Vain computation! and ſuch as would be rejected by the bleſſed God, with the utmoſt abhorrence.—Will all the potentates, that ſway the ſceptre in a thouſand kingdoms, devote their ſacred and honoured lives, to reſcue an obnoxious creature from the ſtroke of vengeance? Alas! it muſt coſt more, vaſtly more, to expiate the malignity of ſin, and ſave a guilty wretch from hell.——Will all the principalities of heaven be content to aſſume my nature, and reſign themſelves

to

§ Eph. iii. 18, 19.

† Quo quiſque altius aſcendit in agnitione Chriſti, eo profundius peccati atrocitatem cognoſcet.

‡ Job vii. 20. Not preſerver, as it ſtands in our verſion, but obſerver of men. Which phraſe, as it expreſſes the ſtrict and inceſſant inſpection of the divine eyes; as it intimates the abſolute impoſſibility, that any tranſgreſſion ſhould eſcape the divine notice; is evidently moſt proper, both to aſſign the reaſon, and heighten the emphaſis of the context.

to death for my pardon *? Even this would be too mean a Satisfaction, for inexorable juſtice; too ſcanty a reparation, of God's injured honour. So flagrant is human guilt, that nothing, but a victim of infinite dignity, could conſtitute an adequate propitiation.—He who ſaid, "Let there be light, "and there was light;" Let there be a firmament, and immediately the blue curtains floated in the ſky; He muſt take fleſh; He muſt feel the fierce torments

* Milton ſets this thought in a very poetical and ſtriking light—All the ſanctities of heaven ſtand round the throne of the ſupreme Majeſty. God foreſees and foretels the Fall of man; the ruin, which will unavoidably enſue on his tranſgreſſion; and the utter impoſſibility of his being ever able to extricate himſelf, from the abyſs of miſery.

He, with his whole poſterity, muſt die;
Die he, or juſtice muſt; unleſs for him
Some other able, and as willing, pay
The rigid ſatisfaction, death for death.

After which affecting repreſentation, intended to raiſe the moſt tender emotions of pity; the following inquiry is addreſſed to all the ſurrounding angels:

Say, heav'nly pow'rs, where ſhall we find ſuch love?
Which of you will be mortal, to redeem
Man's mortal crime? and die, the dead to ſave?
He aſk'd; but all the heav'nly choir ſtood mute,
And ſilence was in heav'n.———

There is, to me at leaſt, an inimitable ſpirit and beauty in the laſt circumſtance.——That ſuch an innumerable multitude of generous and compaſſionate Beings ſhould be ſtruck dumb with ſurprize and terror, at the very mention of the deadly forfeiture and ranſom ſet! No language is ſo eloquent as this ſilence. Words could not poſſibly have expreſſed, in ſo emphatical a manner, the dreadful nature of the taſk; the abſolute inability of any or all creatures to execute it; the ſuper-eminent and matchleſs love of the eternal Son, in undertaking the tremendous work; not only without reluctance, but unſought and unimplored; with readineſs, alacrity, and delight. Paradiſe loſt, Book III. line 209. Edit. BENTL.

torments of crucifixion; and pour out his ſoul in agonies, if ever ſuch tranſgreſſors are pardoned.

How vaſt is the debt; which all the wealth of both the Indies cannot diſcharge! How vitiated that habit of body; which all the drugs produced by nature herſelf, cannot rectify! But how much more ruined was thy condition, O my ſoul! how much more heinous were thy crime? Since nothing leſs than the ſufferings and death of Meſſiah, the Son of God, and radiant image of his glory, could effect thy recovery, or cancel thy iniquity.—Though, perhaps, thou art not ſunk ſo very deep in pollution, as ſome of the moſt abandoned profligates; yet remember the ineſtimable ranſom, paid to redeem thee from everlaſting deſtruction. Remember this; and "never open thy mouth any more *," either to murmur at the divine chaſtiſements, or to glory in thy own attainments. Remember this; and even "loath thyſelf † for the multitude of thy provocations," and thy great baſeneſs.

Once more: Let me view this beautiful, this magnificent expanſe; and conceive ſome juſter apprehenſions, of the unknown richneſs of my Saviour's atonement.——I am informed by a writer who cannot miſtake, that the High-prieſt of my profeſſion, who was alſo the ſacrifice for my ſins, is higher than the heavens ‡; more exalted in dignity, more bright with glory, than all the heavenly manſions, and all their illuſtrious inhabitants. If my heart was humbled, at the conſideration of its exceſſive guilt; how do all my drooping powers revive, at this delightful thought! The poor criminal, that ſeemed to be tottering on the very brink of the infernal pit; is raiſed by ſuch a belief, even to the portals of paradiſe. My ſelf-abaſement, I truſt, will

* Ezek. xvi. 63. † Ezek. xxxvi. 31.
‡ Heb. vii. 26.

will always continue; but my fears, under the influence of ſuch a conviction, are quite gone *. I do not, I cannot, doubt the efficacy of this propitiation. While I ſee a glimpſe of its matchleſs excellency; and verily believe myſelf intereſted in its merits; I know not what it is, to feel any miſgiving ſuſpicions; but am, ſtedfaſt in faith, and joyful through hope.

Be my iniquities like debts of millions of talents, here is more than full payment for all that mighty ſum. Let the enemy of mankind, and accuſer of the brethren, load me with invectives before the dreadful tribunal; this one plea, "a divine Redeemer died," moſt thoroughly quaſhes every indictment. For, though there be much turpitude, and manifold tranſgreſſions, "there is no condemnation to thoſe that are in Chriſt Jeſus."—Nay, were I chargeable with all the vileſt deeds, that have been committed in every age of the world, by every nation

* I am ſorry to find, that ſome of my readers were a little diſguſted at this expreſſion, "My fears are quite gone," as thinking, it diſcovered a tincture of arrogance in the writer, and tended to diſcourage the weak Chriſtian. But I hope a more mature conſideration will acquit me, from both theſe charges.—For what has the Author ſaid? Only, that at ſome peculiarly happy moments, when the Holy Ghoſt bears witneſs of CHRIST in his heart, and is favoured with a glimpſe of the Redeemer's matchleſs excellency,——that, in theſe bright intervals of life, his trembling fears, with regard to the deciſive ſentence of the great tribunal, are turned into pleaſing expectations. And what is there in ſuch a declaration offenſive to the ſtricteſt modeſty, or diſpiriting to the weakeſt believer? Inſtead of ſtriking terror, it points out the way of obtaining a ſettled tranquility. Its natural tendency is, to engage the ſerious mind in a more conſtant and attentive meditation, on the unknown merits of the divine MEDIATOR. And were we more thoroughly acquainted, more deeply affected, with his unutterable dignity; I am perſuaded, our uneaſy apprehenſions would proportionably vaniſh; our faith be eſtabliſhed, our hopes brightened, and our joys inlarged.

tion of men; even in this moſt deplorable caſe, I need not ſink into deſpair. Even ſuch guilt, though grievous beyond all expreſſion, is not to be compared with the abundance of grace and righteouſneſs, which is in the incarnate Divinity.—How great, how tranſcendently glorious, are the perfections of the adored Jehovah! So great, ſo ſuperlatively precious, is the expiation of the dying Jeſus. 'Tis impoſſible for the human mind to exalt this atonement ‡, too highly; 'tis impoſſible for the humble penitent to confide in it, too ſteadily. The ſcriptures, the ſcriptures of eternal truth, have ſaid it (exult, my ſoul, in the belief of it,) that the blood on which we rely, is God's own blood †; and therefore all-ſufficient to expiate, omnipotent to ſave.

DAVID, that moſt egregious ſinner, but more exemplary ſaint, ſeems to have been well acquainted with this comfortable truth. What elſe can be the import of that very remarkable, but devout declaration, "Thou ſhalt purge me * with hyſſop, and

‡ This doctrine, though rich with conſolation to the ruined ſinner; yet, is it not likely to open a door for licentiouſneſs, and embolden tranſgreſſors to proſecute their vices?—No: It is the moſt powerful motive to that genuine repentance, which flows from an ardent love of God; and operates in a hearty deteſtation of all ſin, and an unfeigned deſire to abound in the works of obedience. One who knew the unmeaſurable goodneſs of the Lord, and was no ſtranger to the ſinful perverſeneſs of our nature, ſays, "there is mercy with thee: therefore ſhalt thou be feared." Pſal. cxxx. 4.——Words, full to my purpoſe; which at once add the higheſt authority to this ſentiment, and direct our minds to its proper influence, and due improvement.

† Acts xx. 28.

* Pſal. li. 7. "Thou ſhalt purge." I prefer this tranſlation, before the new one. Becauſe, this ſpeaks the language of a more ſtedfaſt belief, and gives the higheſt honour to the divine goodneſs. Were the words intended to bear no more than the common petitionary ſenſe; and not to be expreſſive of a nobler plerophory of faith; they would rather have been חטאני and בבטני Imperatives, not Futures.

and I ſhall be clean: thou ſhalt waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than ſnow!"—"I have been guilty, I muſt confeſs, of the moſt complicated and ſhocking crimes: Crimes, inflamed by every aggravating circumſtance, with regard to myſelf, my neighbour, and my God. Myſelf, who have been bleſſed above men, and the diſtinguiſhed favourite of Providence; my neighbour, who, in the moſt dear and tender intereſts, has been irreparably injured; my God, who might juſtly expect the moſt grateful returns of duty, inſtead of ſuch enormous violations of his law. Yet, all horrid and execrable as my offence is, it is nothing to the ſuperabundant merit of that great Redeemer, who was promiſed from the foundations of the world; in whom all my fathers truſted; who is the hope of all the ends of the earth. Though my conſcience be more loathſome, with adulterous impurity, than the dunghill; though the moſt barbarous of murders has rendered it, even black as the gloom of hell; yet, waſhed in 'the fountain opened for ſin and uncleanneſs,' ‖ I ſhall be--I ſay not, pure only, this were a diſparagement to the efficacy of the Saviour's death; but I ſhall be fair as the lily, and white as the ſnow. Nay, let me not derogate from the glorious object of my confidence; cleanſed by this ſovereign ſtream, I ſhall be fairer than the full-blown lily, whiter than the new-fallen ſnows."

"Power," ſaith the ſcripture, "belongeth unto God †".——And, in what majeſtic lines, is this attribute of Jehovah written, throughout the whole volume of the creation? Eſpecially through thoſe magnificent pages, unfolded in yonder ſtarry regions. Which are therefore ſtiled by the ſweet and ſublime ſinger of Iſrael, "The firmament of his power ‡." Becauſe the grand exploits of Omnipotence

‖ Zech. viii. 1. † Pſal. lxii. 11. ‡ Pſal. cl. 1.

tence are there diſplayed, with the utmoſt pomp; and recorded, in the moſt legible characters.

WHO, that looks upwards to the midnight ſky; and, with an eye of reaſon, beholds its rolling wonders; can forbear inquiring, Of what were thoſe mighty orbs formed?——Amazing to relate! They were produced without materials. They ſprung from emptineſs itſelf. The ſtately fabric of univerſal Nature emerged out of nothing.——What inſtruments were uſed by the Supreme Architect, to faſhion the parts with ſuch exquiſite niceneſs, and give ſo beautiful a poliſh to the ſurface? With what were the various pieces of the complicated ſtructure, cemented; and how was all connected into one finely-proportioned, and nobly-finiſhed Whole?——A bare fiat accompliſhed all. LET THEM BE, ſaid God. He added no more; and immediately the marvellous edifice aroſe; adorned with every beauty; diſplaying innumerable perfections; and declaring, amidſt admiring ſeraphs, its great Creator's praiſe. "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, and all the hoſt of them by the breath of his mouth ¶."—What wonderful

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force fixed ſome of thoſe vaſt globes, on an immoveable baſis? What irreſiſtible impulſe bowled others, through the dark profound? And what coercive energy confined their impetuous courſes, within the niceſt, ſtricteſt bounds?—Nothing but his ſovereign will. For all things were at firſt conſtituted, and all to this day abide, "according to his ordinance."

WITHOUT any toilſome aſſiduity; or laborious proceſs; to raiſe—to touch—to ſpeak ſuch a multitude of enormous bodies into being;—to launch them through the ſpaces of the ſky, as an arrow from the hand of a giant;——to impreſs on ſuch unwieldy maſſes, a motion, far outſtripping the ſwiftneſs of the winged creation §;—and to continue them in the ſame rapid whirl, for thouſands and thouſands of years;——What an aſtoniſhing inſtance of infinite might is this!—Can any thing be impoſſible to the Lord, the Lord God; the Creator and Controuler of all the ends of the earth, all the borders of the univerſe? Rather, is not all that we count difficult, perfect eaſe to that glorious Being, who only ſpake, and the world was made*? Who only gave command, and the ſtupendous axle was lodged faſt, the lofty wheels moved complete?—What a ſure defence, O my ſoul, is this everlaſting ſtrength of thy God! Be this thy continual refuge, in

§ To give one inſtance of this remark.——The earth, in the diurnal revolution, which it performs on its own axis, whirls about at the rate of above a thouſand miles an hour. And as the great orbit which it deſcribes annually round the ſun, is reckoned at 540 millions of miles, it muſt travel near a million and a half each day.—What an amazing force muſt be requiſite, to protrude ſo vaſt a globe: and wheel it on, loaded as it is with huge mountains, and ponderous rocks, at ſuch a prodigious degree of rapidity! it ſurpaſſes human conception! ——How natural, how pertinent, how almoſt neceſſary after ſuch an obſervation, is the acknowledgement made by holy Job! "I know that thou canſt do every thing, and that no thought can be with-holden from thee." Chap. xlii. 2.

* Pſal. xxxiii. 9.

in the article of danger; this thy never-failing reſource, in every time of need.

WHAT cannot this uncontroulable power of the great Jehovah effect for his people? Be their miſeries ever ſo galling, cannot this God relieve them? Be their wants ever ſo numerous, cannot this God ſupply them? Be their corruptions within, ever ſo inveterate, or their temptations without, ever ſo importunate; cannot this mighty, mighty God ſubdue the one, and fortify them againſt the other?——Should trials, with an inceſſant vehemence, ſift thee as wheat; ſhould tribulation, with a weight of woes, almoſt grind thee to powder; ſhould pleaſure, with her bewitching ſmile, ſolicit thee to delicious ruin, yet, "hold thee faſt by GOD," and lay thy help upon him that is omnipotent *. Thou canſt not be involved in ſuch calamitous

* It is a moſt charming deſcription, as well as comfortable promiſe, which we find in Iſa. xl. 29, 30, 31.—HE giveth power to the feeble; and to them that have no might at all. He not only imparteth, but increaſeth ſtrength; making it to abound, where it did not ſo much as exiſt.——Without this aid of JEHOVAH, even the youths, in the very prime of their vigour and activity, ſhall become languid in their work, and weary in their courſe. And the young men, to whoſe reſolution and abilities nothing ſeemed impracticable, ſhall not only not ſucceed, but utterly fall, and miſcarry in their enterprizes.——Whereas, they that wait upon the LORD, and rely on his grace, ſhall preſs on, with a generous ardor, from one degree of religious improvement to another: inſtead of exhauſting, they ſhall renew their ſtrength; difficulties ſhall animate, and toil invigorate them; they ſhall mount up, as with ſoaring wings above all oppoſition; they ſhall be carried through every diſcouragement, as eagles cleave the yielding air; they ſhall run, with ſpeed and alacrity, the way of GOD's commandments, and not be weary; they ſhall hold on, with conſtancy and perſeverance, in thoſe peaceful paths, and not faint; but arrive at the end of their progreſs, and win the prize of their high calling.

mitous circumſtances, or expoſed to ſuch imminent perils; but thy GOD, whom thou ſerveſt, is able to ſupport thee under the one, and to deliver thee from the other.——To ſupport! to deliver! O, let me not diſhonour the unlimited greatneſs of his power. He is able to exalt thee, from the deepeſt diſtreſs, to the utmoſt triumphant joy; and to make even a complication of evils work together for thy everlaſting good. He is able, not only to accompliſh what I have been ſpeaking, but to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can aſk, or think *.

O! THE

To this moſt chearing doctrine, permit me to add its no leſs beautiful and delightful contraſt. Eliphaz, ſpeaking of the enemies of the righteous, ſays—לאנבחד קימנו—which is rendered by a great critic in ſacred learning, "Nihil exciſum factio nobis adverſaria."—We ſhould reckon, our language acquitted itſelf tolerably well, if, when depreciating the abilities of an adverſary, it ſhould repreſent them weak as the ſcorched thread; feeble as the diſſolving ſmoke. But theſe are cold forms of ſpeech, compared with the eloquence of the Eaſt. According to the genius of our Bible, all the power that oppoſes the Godly is a mere nothing; or, to ſpeak with a more emphatical air of contempt, a deſtroyed, an extirpated nothing.—Admire this expreſſion, ye that are charmed with daring images, and, (what Tully calls verbum ardens) a ſpirited and glowing diction.—Remember this declaration, ye that fight the good fight of faith. The united force of all your enemies, be it ever ſo formidable to the eye of fleſh, is, before your Almighty guardian, nihil nihiliſſimum, not only nothing, but leſs than nothing, and vanity. Job xxii. 20.

* I ſhould, in this place, avoid ſwelling the notes any farther, was it not to take notice of the inimitable paſſage quoted above, and to be found Eph. iii. 20.—Which, if I do not greatly miſtake, is the moſt noble repreſentation of divine power, that it is poſſible for words to frame.——To do all that our tongue can aſk, is a miracle of might. But we often think more than we can expreſs, and are actuated with "groanings unutterable." Yet, to anſwer theſe vaſt deſires, is not beyond the accompliſhment of our heavenly Father. ——Nay, to make all manner of bleſſings commenſurate to the largeſt

O! THE wretched condition of the wicked, who have this LORD of all power for their enemy! O! the deſperate madneſs of the ungodly, who provoke the Almighty to jealouſy!——Beſotted creatures! are you able to contend with your Maker, and enter the liſts againſt incenſed omnipotence? Can you bear the fierceneſs of his wrath, or ſuſtain the vengeance of his lifted arm? At his preſence, though awfully ſerene, the hills melt like wax, and the "mountains ſkip like frighted lambs." At the leaſt intimation of his diſpleaſure, the foundations of nature rock, and the "pillars of heaven tremble." How then can a withered leaf endure, when "his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire?"——Or can any thing ſcreen a guilty worm, when the great and terrible GOD ſhall whet his glittering ſword, and his hand take hold on inexorable judgment? When that hand, which ſhoots the planets, maſſes of exceſſive bulk *, with ſuch ſurprizing celerity, thro' the ſky: that hand, which darts the comets to ſuch unmeaſurable diſtances, beyond the orbit of our remoteſt planet, beyond the purſuit of the ſtrongeſt eye: when THAT HAND is ſtretched out to puniſh, can the munition of rocks, the intervention of ſeas, or even interpoſing worlds, divert the blow?—Conſider this, ambition; and bow thy haughty creſt. Conſider this, diſobedience; and

largeſt ſtretch of human expectations, is a ſmall thing with the GOD of glory. He is able to do above all, that the moſt inlarged apprehenſion can imagine; yea to do abundantly more, exceeding abundantly more, than the mind itſelf, in the utmoſt exertion of all its faculties, is capable of wiſhing, or knows how conceive.

* One of the planets (Saturn) is ſuppoſed to be 427,218, 300,000,000 miles in bulk. The largeſt of the planets (Jupiter) is computed at 920,011,200,000,000 miles.——Such enormous magnitude! winged with ſuch prodigious ſpeed!——It raiſes aſtoniſhment beyond expreſſion——With GOD is terrible Majeſty! Job xxxvii. 22.——Who ſhall not fear THEE, O LORD, and glorify thy name? Rev. xv. 4.

and bend thy iron ſinew. O! conſider this, all ye that forgot or affront the tremendous JEHOVAH. He can, by a ſingle act of his will, lay the univerſe in utter ruin: and can he want power to bring you in a moment, to the duſt of death, or to the flames of Hell? He has,—I ſay not, ten thouſand lightnings to ſcorch you to aſhes; ten thouſand thunders to cruſh you into atoms; but, what is unſpeakably more dreadful,—He has an army of terrors, even in the look of his angry countenance: his very frown is worſe than deſtruction.

I CANNOT diſmiſs this ſubject, without admiring the patience of the bleſſed GOD; who, though ſo "ſtrong and powerful, yet is provoked every day."—Surely, as is his Majeſty, ſo is his mercy; his pity altogether commenſurate to his power. If I vilify but the name of an earthly monarch; I loſe my liberty, and am confined to the dungeon. If I appear in arms, and draw the ſword againſt my national ſovereign; my life is forfeited, and my very blood will ſcarce atone for the crime. But thee I have diſhonoured, O! thou King immortal and inviſible! againſt thee my breaſt has cheriſhed ſecret diſaffection; my behaviour has riſen up in open rebellion; and yet I am ſpared, I am preſerved. Inſtead of being baniſhed from thy preſence; I ſit at thy table, and am fed from thy hand. Inſtead of purſuing me with thunderbolts of vengeance, thy favours ſurround me on every ſide. That arm, that injured arm, which might juſtly fall, with irretrievable ruin, on a traitor's head; is moſt graciouſly ſtretched out, to careſs him, with the tendereſt endearments; to cheriſh him, with every inſtance of parental kindneſs.——O! thou mightieſt, thou beſt of beings, how am I pained at my very ſoul, for ſuch ſhameful and odious diſingenuity! let me always abominate myſelf, as the baſeſt of creatures; but adore that unwearied long-ſuffering of thine, which

which refuſes to be irritated; love that unremitted goodneſs, which no acts of ingratitude could ſtop, or ſo much as check, in its gracious current. O! let this ſtubborn heart; which duty could not bind; which threatnings could not awe; be the captive, the willing captive, of ſuch triumphant beneficence.

I HAVE often been ſtruck with wonder at that Almighty ſkill, which weighed the mountains in ſcales, and the hills in a balance; which proportioned the waters in the hollow of its hand, and adjuſted the duſt of the earth * by a meaſure. But, how much more marvellous is that magnificent oeconomy, which poiſed the ſtars with inexpreſſible nicety, and meted out the heavens with a ſpan! where all is prodigiouſly vaſt; immenſely various; and yet more than mathematically exact. Surely, the wiſdom of GOD manifeſts itſelf in the ſkies, and ſhines in thoſe lucid orbs: ſhines on the contemplative mind, with a luſtre incomparably brighter, than

* The duſt of the earth, in this ſublime ſcripture, ſignifies the dry land, or ſolid part of our globe. Which is placed in contradiſtinction to the whole collection of fluid matter, mentioned in the preceding clauſe.——Perhaps this remarkable expreſſion may be intended to intimate, not only the extreme niceneſs, which ſtated the dimenſions of the round world in general, or in the groſs; but alſo that particular exactneſs, with which the very ſmalleſt materials, that conſtitute its frame (not excepting each individual atom), were calculated and diſpoſed:——q. d. 'Tis a ſmall thing to ſay, no ſuch enormous redundancies, as unneceſſary ridges of mountains, were ſuffered to ſubſiſt. There was not ſo much as the leaſt grain of ſand ſuperfluous, or a ſingle particle of duſt deficient.——As the grand aim of the deſcription is, to celebrate the conſummate wiſdom exemplified in the creation; and to diſplay that perfect proportion, with which every part tallies, coincides, and harmonizes, with the whole; I have taken leave to alter the word of our Engliſh tranſlation, comprehend, and introduce in its ſtead a term, equally faithful to the Hebrew, and more ſignificative of the Prophet's preciſe idea. Iſa. xl. 12.

than that which their united ſplendors tranſmit to the eye.—Behold that countleſs multitude of globes; conſider their amazing bulk; regard them as the ſovereigns of ſo many ſyſtems, each accompanied with his planetary equipage. Upon this ſuppoſition, what a multiplicity of mighty ſpheres muſt be perpetually running their rounds, in the upper regions! Yet, none miſtake their way, or wander from the goal; though they paſs through trackleſs and unbounded fields. None fly off from their orbits, into extravagant excurſions; none preſs in upon their centre, with too near an approach. None interfere with each other in their perennial paſſage; or intercept the kindly communications of another's influence *. But all their rotations proceed in eternal harmony; keeping ſuch time, and obſerving ſuch laws, as are moſt exquiſitely adapted to the perfection of the whole.

While I contemplate this "excellent wiſdom "which made the heavens," and attunes all their motions; how am I abaſhed at the mixture of arrogance and folly, which has, at any time, inclined me to murmur at thy diſpenſations, O LORD! what is this, but a ſort of implicit treaſon againſt thy ſupremacy; and a tacit denial of thy infinite underſtanding?——Haſt thou ſo regularly placed ſuch a wonderful diverſity of ſyſtems, through the boundleſs univerſe?——Didſt thou, without any probationary eſſays, without any improving retouches, ſpeak them into the moſt conſummate perfection?—Didſt thou continually ſuperintend all their circumſtances, with a ſagacity, that never miſtakes the minuteſt title of propriety? And ſhall I be ſo unaccountably

* The interception of light, by means of an eclipſe, happens very rarely: and then is of ſo ſhort a continuance, as not to be at all inconvenient: is attended with ſuch circumſtances, as render it rather uſeful, than prejudicial.

accountably ſtupid, as to queſtion the juſtneſs of thy diſcernment, in "chooſing my inheritance, and fixing the bounds of my habitation?"—Not a ſingle erratum, in modelling the ſtructure; determining the diſtance†; and conducting the career of unnumbered Worlds! And ſhall my peeviſh humour preſume to cenſure thy interpoſition, with regard to the affairs of one inconſiderable Creature; whoſe ſtature, in ſuch a comparative view, is leſs than a ſpan; and his preſent duration, little more than a moment?

O! THOU GOD! "in whoſe hand my breath is, and whoſe are all my ways," let ſuch ſentiments, as now poſſeſs my thoughts, be always lively on my heart! Theſe ſhall compoſe my mind into a chearful acquieſcence, and thankful ſubmiſſion; even when afflictions gall the ſenſe, or diſappointments break my ſchemes. Then ſhall I, like the grateful patriarch ‡, in all the Changes of my condition, and even in the depths of diſtreſs, erect an Altar of adoring Reſignation; and inſcribe it with the Apoſtle's motto, to GOD ONLY WISE. Then, ſhouldſt thou give me leave to be the Carver of my own Fortunes, I would humbly deſire to relinquiſh the grant, and recommit the diſpoſal of myſelf to thy unerring beneficence. Fully perſuaded, that thy counſels, though contrary to my froward inclinations, or even afflictive to my fleſh, are incomparably more eligible, than the blind impulſe of my own will, however ſoothing to animal nature.

ON

† The ſun in particular (and let this ſerve as a ſpecimen of that moſt geometrical exactneſs, with which the other celeſtial bodies are conſtituted, and all their circumſtances regulated) the ſun is formed of ſuch a determinate magnitude, and placed at ſuch a convenient diſtance,—"as not to annoy, but only refreſh us, and nouriſh the ground with its kindly warmth. If it was larger, it would ſet the earth on fire; if ſmaller, it would leave it frozen. If it was nearer us, we ſhould be ſcorched to death; if farther from us, we ſhould not be able to live for want of heat." Stackhouſe's Hiſtory of the Bible.

‡ See Gen. xxii. 7, 8.

On a careleſs inſpection, you perceive no accuracy or uniformity in the poſition of the heavenly bodies. They appear like an illuſtrious Chaos; a promiſcuous heap of ſhining globes; neither ranked in order, nor moving by line.——But, what ſeems confuſion is all regularity. What carries a ſhew of negligence is really the reſult of the moſt maſterly contrivance. You think, perhaps, they rove in their aerial flight; but they rove by the niceſt rule, and without the leaſt error. Their circuits, though ſeemingly devious; their mazes, though intricate to our apprehenſions †; are marked out, not indeed with golden compaſſes, but by the infinitely more exact determinations of the all-wiſe Spirit.

So, what wears the appearance of calamity, in the allotments appointed for the Godly, has really the nature of a bleſſing. It iſſues from fatherly love, and will terminate in the richeſt good. If Joſeph is ſnatched from the embraces of an indulgent parent, and abandoned to ſlavery in a foreign land; it is in order to ſave the holy family from periſhing by famine; and to preſerve "the ſeed, in whom all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed." If he falls into the deepeſt diſgrace, it is on purpoſe that he may riſe to the higheſt honours. Even the confinement of the priſon, by the unſearchable workings of providence, opens his way to the right-hand of the throne itſelf.—Let the moſt afflicted ſervant of Jesus wait the final upſhot of things: and he will diſcover then the apparent expediency, of all thoſe tribulations; which now, perhaps, he can hardly admit, without reluctance, or ſuffer without ſome ſtruggles of diſſatisfaction. Then,

† —— Mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolv'd; yet regular
Then moſt, when moſt irregular they ſeem.
Milt.

Then, the guſhing tear, and the heaving ſigh, will be turned into tides of gratitude, and hymns of holy wonder.

In the mean time, let no audacious railer tax the divine procedure; but, adoring where we cannot comprehend, let us expect the evolution of the myſterious plan. Then, ſhall every eye perceive; that the ſeeming labyrinths of providence were the moſt direct and compendious way, to affect His general purpoſes of grace, and to bring about each one's particular happineſs †——Then, alſo, ſhall it be clearly ſhewn, in the preſence of applauding worlds; why, virtue pined in want, while vice rioted in affluence; why, amiable innocence ſo often dragged the dungeon chain, while horrid guilt trailed the robe of State.——The day of univerſal audit, that day of everlaſting retribution will not only vindicate, but magnify the whole management of Heaven. The auguſt Seſſions ſhall cloſe with this unanimous, this glorious acknowledgment: "Though clouds and darkneſs, impenetrable by any human ſcrutiny were ſometimes round about the ſupreme Conductor of Things; yet Righteouſneſs and Judgment were the conſtant habitation of his ſeat ‡; the invariable ſtandard of all his adminiſtrations.—While we view (if I may illuſtrate the greateſt truths, by inferior occurrences) while we view the Arras, on the ſide of leaſt diſtinction, it is void of any elegant fancy; without any nice ſtrokes of art; nothing but a confuſed jumble of incoherent threads. No ſooner is

† ——————— The moral world
Which, though to us it ſeems embroil'd, moves on
In higher order; fitted, and impell'd,
By wiſdom's fineſt hand, and iſſuing all
In gen'ral Good.———————

THOMS. Winter. l. 584. laſt edit.

‡ Pſal. xcvii. 2.

is the piece beheld in its proper aſpect, but the ſuſpected rudeneſs vaniſhes, and the moſt curious arrangement takes place; we are charmed with deſigns of the fineſt taſte, and figures of the moſt graceful Forms; all is ſhaped with Symmetry; all is clad in Beauty.

THE goodneſs of GOD is moſt eminently diſplayed in the ſkies.—Could we take an underſtanding Survey, of whatever is formed by the divine Architect, throughout the whole extent of material things; our minds would be charmed with their matchleſs excellencies, and our tongues echo back that great encomium, they are "very, very good." Moſt beautiful * in themſelves; contrived by unerring wiſdom, and executed with inimitable ſkill: Moſt uſeful * in their functions; exactly fitting the Places they fill, and completely anſwering the Purpoſes, for which they were intended.—— All the parts of the inanimate creation proclaim, both by their intrinſic and relative excellencies the all-diffuſive beneficence of their Maker.

How much more wonderful are the diſplays of divine Indulgence, in the worlds of Life! Becauſe, dead matter is incapable of delight; therefore, the gracious Creator has raiſed innumerable ranks of perceptive exiſtence: ſuch as are qualified to taſte his bounty, enjoy each a happineſs ſuited to its peculiar

* * This καλοκαγαθια of the univerſe, and all its parts has been very highly, and very juſtly extolled, by the antient inquirers into nature. And was, indeed, an illuſtrious ſcene, ſpread before the ſages of the heathen world; wherein to contemplate the goodneſs, and the glories, of the ſupreme being. —It was nobly ſaid, by a Pagan philoſopher, on this occaſion, Εις ερωτα μεταβληθηναι τον Θεον μελλοντα δημιουργειν. That GOD, when he undertook the work of creation, transformed himſelf into love.—But he need not transform himſelf into this amiable Principle; for, God *is* Love:" As was much more loftily ſaid by one, whom that philoſopher would have termed a barbarian, 1 John iv. 8.

culiar ſtate. With this view, he furniſhed the regions of inferior nature, with a moſt numerous ſeries of ſenſitive beings. The waters teem with ſhoals of finny inhabitants. The dry land ſwarms with animals of every order. The dwellings of the Firmament are occupied by multitudes of winged people. Not ſo much as a green Leaf, philoſophers ſay, but lodges and accommodates its puny animalcule tenants*.—And wherefore this diverſity, this profuſion of living Creatures; flying the Air, treading the Ground, and gliding through the paths of the Sea? For this noble reaſon,—— That the great Sovereign may exerciſe his ſuperabundant goodneſs; that his Table may be furniſhed with millions and millions of Gueſts; that He may fill every hour, every moment, their mouths with Food, or their Hearts with gladneſs.

BUT,

* A very celebrated poet, in a beautiful paragraph on this ſubject, informs his readers, that all nature ſwarms with life. In ſubterranean cells, the earth heaves with vital motion. Even the hard ſtone, in the very inmoſt receſſes of its impenetrable citadel, holds multitudes of animated inhabitants. The pulp of mellow fruit, and all the productions of the orchard, feed the inviſible nations. Each liquid, whether of acid taſte, or milder reliſh, abounds with various forms of ſenſitive exiſtence. Nor is the pure ſtream, or tranſparent air, without their colonies of unſeen people.——In which conſtitution of things, we have a wonderful inſtance, not only of the divine goodneſs to thoſe minute beings, in giving them a capacity for animal grarifications; but of his tender care for mankind, in making them imperceptible to our ſenſes.

—— Theſe, conceal'd
By the kind art of forming heav'n, eſcape
The groſſer eye of man: For, if the worlds
In worlds incloſ'd ſhould on his ſenſes burſt;
From cates ambroſial, and the nectar'd bowl,
He'd turn abhorrent; and, in dead of night,
When ſilence ſleeps o'er all, be ſtunn'd with noiſe.

THOMSON'S Summer.

But, what a ſmall Theatre are three or four elements, for the operations of Jehovah's Bounty! His magnificent liberality, ſcorns ſuch ſcanty limits. If you aſk, Wherefore has he created all Worlds, and repleniſhed them with an unknown multiplicity of Beings; riſing, one above another, in an endleſs Gradation of ſtill richer endowments, and ſtill nobler capacities? The Anſwer is,——— For the manifeſtation of his own glory, and eſpecially for the communication of his inexhauſtible Beneficence †.—The great Creator could propoſe no advantage to himſelf. His bliſs is incapable of any addition. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made," He was ſupremely happy, in his own independent and all-ſufficient ſelf. His grand deſign therefore, in erecting ſo many ſtately fabrics; and peopling them with ſo many tribes of inhabitants; was, to tranſfuſe his exuberant kindneſs, and impart felicity in all its forms. Ten thouſand worlds, ſtocked with ten thouſand times ten thouſand ranks, of ſenſitive and intelligent exiſtence, are ſo many ſpacious gardens; which, with rivers of communicated joy, this ever-flowing fountain waters continually.

Boundless *, and (which raiſes our idea of this divine principle, to the very higheſt degree of perfection) diſintereſted * munificence! How inexpreſſibly

† A ſacred writer, conſidering this pleaſing ſubject; and confining his obſervation, within the narrow limits of his own country; cries out, with a mixture of amazement and gratitude, "How great is his goodneſs, and how great is his beauty!" —Who then can forbear being loſt in wonder, and tranſported with delight; when he extends his ſurvey, to thoſe infinitely more copious communications of divine bounty; which, like ſalutary and refreſhing ſtreams, run through all worlds; and make not only the little Valleys of a ſingle kingdom, but the immenſity of creation laugh and ſing? Zech. ix. 17.

* * In this ſenſe, There is none good but one, that is God. None univerſally and eſſentially good: None whoſe goodneſs extends

ſibly amiable is the bleſſed God, conſidered in this charming light! Is it poſſible to conceive any excellence, ſo adorable and lovely; as infinite benevolence, guided by unerring wiſdom, and exerting Almighty Power, on purpoſe to make a whole univerſe happy?——O my ſoul, what an irreſiſtable attractive is here! What a moſt worthy object, for thy moſt fervent affection! Shall now every glittering toy become a rival to this tranſcendently beneficent Being, and rob him of thy heart?——O! no. Let his creating arm teach thee, to truſt in the fulneſs of his ſufficiency:———Let his all-ſuperintending eye incline thee, to ſubmit to his decrees:——And let his bounty; ſo freely vouchſafed; ſo amply diffuſed; win thee to love him, with all the warmeſt affections of a grateful and admiring ſoul: win thee to ſerve him, not with joyleſs awe, or ſlaviſh dread, but with unfeigned alacrity, and a delightful complacency.

But, if the goodneſs of God is ſo admirably ſeen, in the works of nature, and the favours of providence; with what a noble ſuperiority, does it even triumph, in the myſtery of redemption †! Redemption

extends itſelf, in an infinite variety of bleſſings, to every capable object; or, who always diſpenſes his favours, from the ſole principle of free and diſintereſted benevolence.

† In this, and in other parts of the Contemplations, the reader will obſerve, that the attributes of the Deity are repreſented, as ſhining, with more diſtinguiſhed luſtre, in the wonders of redemption, than in the works of creation. If ſuch remarks ſhould ſeem to be unprecedented, or to ſtand in need of a vindication; permit me to ſubjoin the ſentiments of a great critic, equally verſed in both thoſe ſublime theories——— "Tully, ſays he, requires, in his perfect orator ſome ſkill in the nature of heavenly bodies; becauſe, his mind will become more extenſive and unconfined; and when he deſcends to treat of human affairs, he will both think and write in a more exalted and magnificent manner. For the ſame reaſon, that excellent maſter would have recommended the ſtudy of thoſe great

demption is the brighteſt mirror, in which to contemplate this moſt lovely attribute of the Deity. Other gifts are only as mites from the divine treaſury; but redemption opens, I had almoſt ſaid exhauſts, all the ſtores of his glorious grace. Herein, "God commendeth his love*: not only manifeſts, but renders it perfectly marvellous: manifeſts it in ſo ſtupendous a manner, that it is beyond parallel; beyond thought; and "above all bleſſing and praiſe."——Was He not thy Son, everlaſting God, thy only Son; the Son of thy boſom from eternal ages; the higheſt object of thy complacential delight? Was not thy love to this adorable Son, incomparably greater than the tendereſt affection of any, or the united affections of all mortal parents? Was not the bleſſed Jeſus more illuſtrious in excellency, than all angels; more exalted in dignity, than all heavens? And yet, didſt thou reſign him, for poor mortals; for vile ſinners? Couldſt thou ſee him deſcend, from his royal throne; and take up his abode, in the ſordid ſtable? See him forego the homage of the ſeraphim; and ſtand expoſed to the reproachful indignities, of an inſolent rabble? See him arraigned at the bar, and ſentenced to death; numbered with malefactors, and nailed to the gibbet; bathed in his own innocent blood, and pouring out his ſoul in agonies of ſorrow?——— Could the Father, the Father himſelf, with unknown philanthropy, ſay; "It muſt, it ſhall, be ſo? My pity to rebellious man pleads, and prevails. Awake, therefore, O ſword †, edged with divine

great and glorious myſteries, which revelation has diſcovered to us; to which the nobleſt parts of this ſyſtem of the world are as much inferior as the creature is leſs excellent than the Creator." Spect. Vol. VIII. No. 633.

* Rom. v. 8.

† Zech. xiii. 7.

divine wrath. Awake; and be ſheathed in that immaculate breaſt; pierce that dearly beloved heart. I am content, that my Son endure the ſharpneſs of death, rather than ſinful mortals periſh for ever." ———Incomprehenſible love! May it, henceforward, be the favourite ſubject of my meditation; more delightful to my muſing mind, than applauſe to the ambitious ear! May it be the darling theme of my diſcourſe; ſweeter to my tongue, than the droppings of the honeycomb to my taſte! May it be my choiceſt comfort, through all the changes of life; and my reviving cordial even in the laſt extremities of diſſolution itſelf!

A PROPHET, contemplating, with a diſtant ſurvey, this unexampled inſtance of Almighty Love, is wrapt into a tranſport of delight. At a loſs for proper acknowledgments, he calls upon the whole univerſe to aid his labouring breaſt, and ſupply his lack of praiſe. Sing melodiouſly, ye vaulted heavens; exult, and even leap for gladneſs, thou cumberous earth; ye mountains, break your long ſilence, and burſt into peals of loud acclamation †; for the Lord, by this precious gift, and this great ſalvation, hath comforted his people.——A ſacred hiſtorian hath left it upon record; that, at the

† Iſa. xlix. 13.——I have not adhered to our common tranſlation, but endeavoured to preſerve, ſomewhat more faithfully, the noble Pathos, and inimitable Energy of the ſacred original.——The love of God manifeſted in a divine and dying Saviour, is a bleſſing of ſuch inconceivable richneſs; as muſt render all acknowledgments flat, and all encomiums languid. Yet, I think, the moſt poetical and moſt emphatical celebration of that unſpeakable inſtance of goodneſs, is contained in this rapturous exclamation of the prophet. Which intimates, with a wonderful majeſty of ſentiment, that even the whole compaſs of the inanimate creation, could it be ſenſible of the benefit, and capable of delight, would expreſs its gratitude, in all theſe demonſtrations of the moſt lively and exuberant joy.

firſt exhibition of this raviſhing ſcene, there was with the angel, who brought the bleſſed tidings, a multitude of the heavenly hoſt; praiſing God, and making the concave of the ſkies reſound with their Hallelujahs. At the dawn of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, when He was beginning to riſe with healing in his wings, the morning ſtars ſang together, and all the ſons of God ſhouted for joy. ——And ſhall man, whom this gracious diſpenſation principally reſpects; ſhall man, who is the centre of all theſe gladdening rays; ſhall he have no heart to adore, no anthem to celebrate, this

"Love without end, and without meaſure grace?"
MILT.

How clear is the face of thy ſky, and how perfectly pure! Clearer than the limpid ſtream, more pure than the poliſhed cryſtal. That ſtately ceiling; fretted with gold, and ſtretched to an extent of many millions of leagues, is not diſfigured with a ſingle flaw. That azure mantle; embroidered with ſtars, and ſpacious enough to form a covering for unnumbered worlds; is without the leaſt ſpot or wrinkle.—Yet, this can ſcarce yield us ſo much as a faint repreſentation of the Divine Purity. God, is a God of the moſt immaculate excellence. His ways are uprightneſs itſelf: his counſels and words, the very ſanctity of wiſdom, and of truth. The laws, which he has given to univerſal nature, are exquiſitely contrived, and beyond all poſſibility of improvement. The precepts, which he has appointed for the human race; are a compleat ſummary, of all that is honourable in itſelf, and perfective of the rational mind.—Not the leaſt overſight, in planning a ſeries of events for all futurity; nor the leaſt mal-adminiſtration, in managing the affairs of every age, ſince time began; of every nation, under the whole heaven. ——Pardon theſe diſparaging expreſſions. A nega-

tive perfection is far, far beneath thy dignity, O Thou moſt Higheſt †: In all theſe inſtances; in all thy acts, and all thy attributes; thou art not only holy, but "glorious in holineſs."

So inconceivably holy is the Lord God of Hoſts, that he ſees defilement even in the brightneſs of yonder firmament. Thoſe living ſapphires, before his Majeſty, cloſe their luſtre. "He looketh even to the moon, and it ſhineth not; yea, the ſtars are not pure in his ſight." How much leſs man, who, in his fallen and depraved ſtate, is little better than a worm, that crawls in the corrupted carcaſe; and

† O Thou moſt Higheſt.—This expreſſion occurs more than once, in the pſalms uſed by the eſtabliſhed church, and is, I think, one of thoſe Beauties; which, becauſe often exhibited, generally eſcape our notice. It is a ſuperlative formed on a ſuperlative; and, though not ſtrictly conformable to grammatical rules, is nobly ſuperior to them all.——The language ſeems to be ſenſible of its own deficiency, when the incomprehenſible JEHOVAH is addreſſed, or celebrated. Oppreſſed, as it were, with the glories of the ſubject, it labours after a more emphatical manner of diction, than the ordinary forms of ſpeech afford.——It is, if I rightly judge, one of thoſe daring and happy peculiarities of a maſterly genius, which Mr. Pope ſo finely deſcribes; and while he deſcribes, exemplifies:

> Great wits ſometimes may glorioufly offend,
> And riſe to faults true critics dare not mend:
> From vulgar bounds with brave diſorder part,
> And ſnatch a grace beyond the reach of art.
>
> Eſſay on Criticiſm.

St. Paul's ——ελαχιστοτερῳ παντων των αγιων——is a beautiful paſſage of the like nature; which our tranſlators have very properly rendered, leſs than the leaſt of all Saints.———His ——πολλῳ μαλλον κρεισσον——is another inſtance of the ſame kind. But here, the Engliſh verſion fails. Far better—is extremely flaccid, compared with the nervous original. And I greatly queſtion, whether it is poſſible to tranſlate the ſentence with equal conciſeneſs, and equal ſpirit. See Eph. iii. 8. Phil. i. 23.

the ſon of man, who, by reaſon of his manifold actual impurities, is too juſtly compared to an inſect, that wallows amidſt ſtench and putrefaction †? ——Is there not then abundant cauſe, for the moſt irreproachable, and eminent of mankind, to renounce, all arrogant pretenſions; to lay aſide every aſſuming air; to take nothing but ſhame and confuſion to themſelves? A holy ſufferer, and a holy Prophet, felt ſuch humbling impreſſions, from a glimpſe of the uncreated purity. I abhor myſelf in duſt and aſhes ‖, was the declaration of the one: I am a man of unclean lips §, the confeſſion of the other.——And ſhould not this teach us all, to adore the divine mercies, for that precious purifying

† Job xxv. 5, 6. I ſubmit it to the judgment of the learned, whether this is not the true meaning of the text.——— It may not be able, perhaps, to recommend itſelf, to the ſqueamiſhly nice critic, or to thoſe, who are always extolling the ſuppoſed dignity of the human nature. But it ſeems, in preference to every other interpretation, ſuitable to the ſacred context; and is far, far from being injurious to the character of that apoſtate Race, which is "altogether become abominable." and "is as an unclean thing."——On this ſuppoſition, there is not only an apparent, but a very ſtriking contraſt, between the purity of God, and the pollution of man: The purity of God, which outſhines the moon, and eclipſes the ſtars; the pollution of man which renders him as loathſome to the all-ſeeing eye, as the vileſt vermin are in ours.——— Without aſſigning this ſenſe to the paſſage, I cannot diſcern the force of the antitheſis, or indeed the propriety of the ſentiment. Worms, in the general, give us an idea of meanneſs and infirmity; not of defilement and impurity; unleſs they are inſects of ſuch a particular kind, and conſidered in ſuch noiſome circumſtances.—The two words of the Original——רמה and תולעה———are evidently uſed in this ſignification by Moſes and Iſaiah; by the one to denote the vermin, that devoured the putrified manna; by the other, to expreſs the reptiles, which ſwarm in the body that ſees corruption. Exod. xvi. 20. Iſa. xiv. 11.

‖ Job xlii. 6. § Iſa. vi. 5.

ing fountain †; which was foretold from the foundations of the world; but was opened at that awful juncture, when knotty whips tore the flesh; when ragged thorns mangled the temples; when sharpened nails cut fresh sluices for the crimson current; when the gash of the Spear compleated the dreadful work, and forthwith flowed there, from the wounded heart, blood and water?

Especially since the God, in whose sight the very Heavens are not unsullied; though so curiously fine and "spread out like a molten looking-glass;"—since this GOD saw no blemish in his dear Son. His all-penetrating and jealous eye, discerned nothing amiss, nothing defective, in our glorious Redeemer. Nothing amiss? Yea, he bore this most illustrious testimony, concerning his holy child Jesus: In him I am pleased; I am well pleased; I acquiesce, with intire complacency, and the highest delight in his person; his undertaking; and the whole execution of his office."—How should this thought enliven our hopes; while the other mortifies our pride? Ought not our hearts to spring within us, and even leap for joy; from the repeated assurances given us by revelation, that such a divinely excellent being is our Mediator? What apparent reason has every believer, to adopt the blessed virgin's exclamation! "My soul doth magnify the LORD for this transcendent mercy; and my spirit rejoices, not in wide-extended harvests, waving over my fertile glebe *; nor in armies vanquished, and leaving the peculiar treasure of nations for my spoil *; but in an infinitely richer, nobler

† In that day there shall be a Fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusulem for sin and uncleanness. Zech. xiii. 1.

* * The inspired Penman, from these two occasions of distinguished Joy, sets forth the incomparably greater delight, which arises from the Gift of a Saviour, and the Blessing of Redemption. Isa. ix. ver. 3. compared with ver. 6.

nobler Bleſſing, even in GOD my Saviour."—That a perſon ſo ſublime and perfect, has vouchſafed to become my ſurety: to give himſelf for my ranſom, in the world below; and act as my advocate, in the royal preſence above: yea, to make my Recovery, the reward of his Sufferings; my final Felicity, the honour of his mediatorial Kingdom!

When an innumerable multitude † of bodies, many of them more than a hundred thouſand miles in diameter ‡, are all ſet in motion;——when the orbits, in which they perform their periodical revolutions, are extended at the rate of ſeveral hundreds of millions:——when each has a diſtinct and ſeparate Sphere, for finiſhing his vaſt Circuit:—when none knows, what it is to be cramped, but moſt freely expatiates, in his unbounded Career:—when every one is placed at ſuch an immenſe Remove from each other; that they appear to their reſpective inhabitants, only as ſo many ſpots of light:—O! how aſtoniſhing muſt be the expanſe, which yields room for all theſe mighty globes, and their widely-diffuſed operations! To what prodigious lengths did the Almighty builder ſtretch his line, when he marked out the ſtupendous platform!—I wonder at ſuch an immeaſurable extent. My very thoughts are loſt in this Abyſs of ſpace. But, be it known to mortals; be it never forgot by ſinners; that, in all its moſt ſurpriſing amplitude, it is ſmall, it is ſcanty, compared with the bounty and the mercy of its Maker.

His

† This refers, not only to the planets which paſs and repaſs about our ſun, but alſo to the other Planetary Worlds, which are ſuppoſed to attend the ſeveral fixed Stars.

‡ The Diameter of Jupiter is calculated at 130,653 miles, while his Orbit is reckoned to conſiſt of 895,134,000. Which computation, according to the maxims of Aſtronomy, and the laws of proportion, may, as is taken for granted in the Contemplations, be applied to other planets revolving round other ſuns.

His bounty is abſolutely without limits ‡, and without end. The moſt laviſh generoſity cannot exhauſt, or even diminiſh his munificence. O! all ye tribes of men; or rather, all ye claſſes of intelligent creatures; ye are not ſtraitened in the liberality of your ever-bleſſed Creator; be not ſtraitened in your own expectations. "Open your mouth wide, and he ſhall fill it" with copious and continual draughts from the cup of joy. Your God, on whom is your whole dependance, is more than able; is more than willing; to "ſupply all your need, according to his riches in Glory."——When the Lord Jehovah is the giver, and his grace the § gift; let your wiſhes be unbounded, and your cravings inſatiable. All that created beings can poſſibly covet, is but a very ſmall pittance of that unknown happineſs, which the everlaſting Benefactor is ready to beſtow. Form not your eſtimate of the ſupreme beneficence, from thoſe narrow models of mortal kindneſs; which either your own experience has obſerved, or the hiſtory

‡ By Bounty, I mean not the actual exerciſe, or the effects, of this excellency in the Deity. Theſe are, and always muſt be, through the immenſe perfection of the attribute, and the neceſſary ſcantineſs of the recipient, bounded. But, I would be underſtood, as ſpeaking of the divine power, and the divine will, to exert divine beneficence. Theſe can have no real, no imaginable limits. Theſe, after a communication of bleſſings, diſtributed to unnumbered worlds, continued thro' unnumbered ages, muſt *ſtill* have more to beſtow; for *ever* have more to beſtow; *infinitely* more to beſtow, than it is poſſible for creation itſelf to receive.

§ 2 Cor. ix. 8. God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye, having all ſufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.—How beautiful, and emphatical is this deſcription! inferior to nothing, but that extent of ability, and thoſe riches of liberality, which it ſo eloquently celebrates. Does it not exhauſt all the powers of language; while it attempts to give us a ſpecimen of the munificence of the Lord?

hiſtory of Ages has recorded. Suppoſe every charitable diſpoſition, which warms the hearts of the human race, added to thoſe more inlarged affections, which glow in heavenly Boſoms; what were they all, even, in their higheſt exerciſe, compared with the benignity of the divine nature?——Bleſs me then, Thou eternal ſource of love; bleſs all that reverence thy holy name; according to thy own moſt profuſe goodneſs: whoſe great prerogative it is to diſdain all meaſure. O! bleſs us, in proportion to that Grace; the richneſs of which (unutterable by the tongues of men, and of angels) was once ſpoke in the groans, and written in the wounds of thy expiring Son!

And as for the mercy of God, it is "greater than the heavens; more extenſive than the dimenſions of the ſky. Charming thought! tranſporting reflection! Let me indulge thee once more *. Let me think over the noble Diſplays of this lovely attribute; and, while I admire the trophies of forgiving goodneſs, add one to the number. ——With what amiable and affecting colours is this repreſented in the Parable of the Prodigal! What could induce that fooliſh youth, to forſake his gracious father? Had he not been tenderly cheriſhed by the good parent; and loaded with Benefits from his indulgent hand? Were not the Reſtraints of parental

* This refers to page 78, of Reflections on a flower-garden. The following pages, to the 136th, exhibit a digreſſive view of the Divine mercy. I thought it proper to apprize my Reader of this excurſion; though, I hope, it will be needleſs to offer an apology for dwelling ſo long upon this delightful theme. Who can complain of tedioufneſs, while I ſpeak conſolation to diſtreſſed, and recovery to ruined creatures? The divine mercy is the ſole Fountain of all our preſent and future bleſſings. In proportion to this benign attribute, human hopes ariſe, and human felicity flows. Who, therefore, can be weary of viewing and reviewing; when the lengths and breadths of forgiving grace, are the raviſhing proſpect?

rental government an eaſy Yoke? or rather a preſervative from Ruin? Notwithſtanding every endearing obligation, he revolts from his duty; and launches out into ſuch ſcandalous irregularities, as were a diſhonour to his Family, and deſtructive to himſelf.—But, when afflictions brought him to a ſenſe of his folly, and ſharp neceſſity drove him to a ſubmiſſive return; did the injured father diſcover the leaſt reſentment of mind? Quite the reverſe. He eſpied him, while he was yet a great way off; and the moment he beheld the profligate creature, "his bowels ſounded like an harp," touched with notes divinely ſoft. He never once thinks of the riotous living, and infamous courſe of debaucheries. Pity, parental pity, paſſes an act of oblivion; and, in one inſtant, cancels a ſeries of long continued provocations.——So ſtrong are the Yearnings of fatherly affection; that he even runs, to receive the naked and deſtitute wretch, to his arms. And is there a ſingle frown in his brow, or one upbraiding word on his tongue?——Inſtead of reproaching him for his odious exceſſes; he falls on his neck, and ſnatches him to his eager embraces. Inſtead of rejecting him with indignation, for his undutiful extravagance; he kiſſes him with tears of delight: and rejoices at his return from folly; as he formerly rejoiced on the day of his nativity.——When this companion of harlots opens his mouth, before he ſpeaks, the father hears. He interrupts him in the midſt of his intended Speech. The overflowings of his compaſſionate Heart can brook no delay. He ſeems to be uneaſy himſelf, till he has made the afflicted penitent glad, with the aſſurance of his acceptance, and the choiceſt of his favours. While the poor abaſhed offender ſeeks nothing more than not to be abhorred; he is thoroughly reconciled. While he requeſts no other indulgence, than only to be treated as the meaneſt ſervant; he is careſſed,

and

and honoured, as the deareſt of children.——Was there ever ſo bright and winning a picture of the tendereſt mercy; moſt freely vouchſafed to the moſt unworthy of creatures? Yet thus, my ſoul; and thus, my fellow ſinner; will the LORD GOD of everlaſting compaſſions receive us; if, with a contrite ſpirit, and lively faith, we turn to him through JESUS CHRIST.

'WHERE ſin has abounded,' ſays the proclamation from the court of Heaven, 'grace doth much more abound.'——By this, Manaſſeh, a monſter of barbarity, and an adept in Iniquity, becomes a child of forgiving love, and an heir of immortal glory.—Behold that bitter and bloody perſecutor Saul; when, breathing out threatnings *, and bent upon ſlaughter, he worried the lambs, and put to death the diſciples of the bleſſed JESUS. Who, upon the principles of human judgment, would not have pronounced him a veſſel of wrath, deſtined to unavoidable damnation? Nay, would not have been

* Acts ix. 1. Σαυλος ετι εμπνεων απειλης και φονου "Saul yet breathing out threatning and ſlaughter."—What a repreſentation is here of a mind, mad with rage, and abandoned to the fierceſt extremes of barbarity! I ſcarce know, whether I am more ſhocked at the perſecutor's ſavage diſpoſition, or charmed with the Evangeliſt's lively deſcription.—The adverb—ετι—ſeems to refer to chap. viii. ver. 3. and has, in this connection, a peculiar force. The havock he had committed, the inoffenſive families he had already ruined, were not ſufficient to aſſuage his vengeful ſpirit. They were only a taſte; which inſtead of glutting the blood-hound, made him more cloſely purſue the track, and more eagerly pant for deſtruction.—He is ſtill athirſt for violence and murder. So reſtleſs and inſatiable is his thirſt, that he even breathes out threatning and ſlaughter. His words are ſpears and arrows, and his tongue a ſharp ſword. 'Tis as natural for him to menace the Chriſtians, as to breathe the air.—Nay, they bleed every hour, every moment, in the purpoſes of his rancorous heart. It is only owing to want of power, that every ſyllable he utters, every breath he draws, does not deal about deaths, and cauſe ſome of the innocent diſciples to fall.

been ready to conclude, that, if there were heavier chains, and a deeper dungeon, in the world of woe; they muſt ſurely be reſerved, for ſuch an implacable enemy of true goodneſs? Yet, (admire, and adore, the riches of almighty grace!) this Saul, is elected into the goodly fellowſhip of the Prophets; is numbered with the noble army of Martyrs; and makes a diſtinguiſhed figure among the glorious company of the Apoſtles.——The Corinthians were flagitious, even to a proverb. Some of them wallowed in ſuch abominable vices, and habituated themſelves to ſuch outrageous acts of injuſtice, as were a reproach to human nature. Yet, even theſe ſons of violence, and ſlaves of ſenſuality, "were waſhed; were ſanctified; were juſtified *." Waſhed, in the precious blood of a dying Redeemer; ſanctified, by the powerful operations of the bleſſed Spirit; juſtified, through the infinitely tender mercies of a gracious God. And thoſe, who were once the burden of the earth, are now the joy of Heaven, and the delight of Angels.

There is another inſtance in ſcripture, which moſt loudly publiſhes that ſweeteſt of the divine names, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth; keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin." An inſtance this, which exceeds all the former; which exceeds whatever can be imagined; which if I was to forget, the very ſtones might cry out and ſound it in my ears. I mean the caſe of thoſe ſinners, who murdered the Prince of Peace, and Lord of Glory. Theſe men could ſcarce have the ſhadow of an excuſe for their crime; hardly a circumſtance, to extenuate their guilt. They were well acquainted with his exemplary converſation; they had often heard his heavenly doctrines; they were almoſt daily ſpectators of his unequalled miracles. They therefore

* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

therefore had all poſſible reaſon to honour him, as the moſt illuſtrious of Beings; and to receive him —into their houſes—their arms—their very hearts —as the moſt ineſtimable of bleſſings. Yet, notwithſtanding all theſe engaging motives to love him, even above their own lives; they ſeize his perſon; aſperſe his character; drag him before a heathen tribunal; and extort a ſentence of death, againſt innocence and holineſs itſelf. Never was the vileſt ſlave ſo contumeliouſly abuſed; nor the moſt execrable malefactor ſo barbarouſly executed. The ſun was confounded at the ſhocking ſcene; and one cannot but wonder, how the avenging lightenings could withhold their flaſhes. The earth trembled at the horrid deed; and why, why did it not cleave aſunder, and open a paſſage, for ſuch blood-thirſty miſcreants, into the nethermoſt Hell? Shall theſe ever hope to obtain forgiveneſs from the righteous Judge? Shall not theſe be conſigned over to inexorable wrath, and the ſevereſt torments?—O the miraculous effects of divine grace! O the triumphant goodneſs of GOD our Saviour! Many even of theſe impious wretches, at the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, were convinced of their enormous ſin; were wounded with penitential remorſe; fled to the ſanctuary of the croſs, and laid hold on the horns of that altar; had their pardon ratified by the baptiſmal ſeal; and, continuing in the Apoſtles doctrine, were made partakers of the kingdom of Heaven: where they now ſhine, as ſo many everlaſting Monuments of moſt diſtinguiſhed Mercy; and receive beatitude paſt utterance, from that very Redeemer, whom once "with wicked hands they crucified and ſlew."——Well might the prophet cry out, with a pleaſing amazement, "Who is a GOD like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by tranſgreſſion *?"——Let all fleſh remember; let all fleſh rejoice;

* Mic. vii. 18.

joice; That with the LORD there is ſuch Mercy, and with his CHRIST ſuch plentiful Redemption.

WHAT a grand and majeſtic Dome is the Sky! And where are the Pillars that ſupport the ſtately Concave? What art, moſt exactly true, balanced the preſſure; and what props, of inſuperable ſtrength, ſuſtain the weight? How is that immeaſurable arch upheld, unſhaken, and unimpaired; while ſo many generations of buſy mortals have ſunk and diſappeared, as bubbles upon the ſtream; ———If thoſe Stars are of ſuch an amazing bulk; how are they alſo faſtened, in their lofty ſituation? By what miracle in mechanics, are ſo many thouſands of ponderous orbs kept from falling upon our heads; kept from daſhing both the world to pieces, and its inhabitants to death; are they hung in golden, or adamantine chains? Reſt they their enormous load, on rocks of marble, or columns of braſs? No; they are pendulous in fluid æther: and yet are more immoveably fixed, than if the everlaſting mountains lent their ridges for a baſis. The Almighty architect ſtretches out the North, and its whole ſtarry train, over the empty place. He hangs the earth, and all the ethereal globes upon nothing*. Yet are their foundations laid ſo ſure, that they can "never be moved at any time."

No unfit repreſentation, to the ſincere Chriſtian, of his final perſeverance †: but ſuch as points out the

* Job xxvi. 7.

† With regard to the final perſeverance of the true believer; I am ſenſible, that this point is not a little controverted.—The ſentiments which follow, are my ſtedfaſt belief. It is by no means proper, in a work of this nature, to enter upon a diſcuſſion of the ſubject. Neither have I room, ſo much as to hint, what might be urged for its ſupport.—Let my reader obſerve, that I am far from delivering it as eſſential to Chriſtianity, or neceſſary to ſalvation. Millions of the very contrary conviction

the cauſe which effects it; and conſtitutes the pledge, which aſcertains it.—His nature is all enfeebled.

conviction are, I doubt not, high in the favour of GOD; and in a growing meetneſs, for his heavenly kingdom. As I blame none for rejecting, none, I hope, will be offended with me for eſpouſing, this particular doctrine.—To be of different opinions, at leaſt in ſome inferior inſtances, ſeems an unavoidable conſequence of our preſent ſtate: where ignorance in part, cleaves to the wiſeſt minds; and prejudice eaſily beſets the moſt impartial judgments. It may alſo turn to our common advantage; and afford opportunity for exerciſing the healing virtues of moderation, meekneſs and forbearance.—Let me only be permitted to aſk whether this tenet does not evidently tend to eſtabliſh the comfort of the Chriſtian; to magnify the fidelity of GOD our Saviour; and whether, far from countenancing ſloth, or encouraging remiſſneſs, to know that our labour ſhall not be in vain, is not the moſt prevailing inducement to abound in the work of the LORD? 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Is any one inclined to examine the reaſons which have made the author a proſelyte to this perſuaſion? He may find them diſplayed in the celebrated paper, delivered by the moſt eminent Divines of the church of England; at the ever-memorable Synod of Dordt——(See Acta Synod. Dodrac. Part 2. page 403 of the Latin edition, publiſhed in a ſingle quarto volume)—Thoſe, who have no opportunity of conſulting the memoirs of that venerable aſſembly, I would refer to the works of the indefagitable and very learned Turretin, or to thoſe of the candid and elegant Witſius.

The lateſt and fulleſt view of the point, which I ever remember to have met with, in any of our Engliſh writers, is in the Lime-ſtreet Lectures, which are a defence of ſeveral moſt important doctrines of the goſpel, and contained in two octavo volumes; the united labours of nine modern Divines; moſt of whom are well known to the world, by their other evangelical and uſeful writings. In thoſe Lectures, the final perſeverance of the Saints is very particularly ſtated, and, to my apprehenſion at leaſt, moſt ſatisfactorily proved; the arguments uſually urged againſt it, impartially conſidered, and I cannot but think (with all due deference, to the judgment of others) unanſwerably confuted.

And here (not to ſwell this note any farther) I ſhall only juſt hint, that the judicious Hooker (an authority, perhaps, as weighty and unexceptionable as any that can well be produced) gives a ſolemn atteſtation to this tenet, in a ſhort diſcourſe on the perpetuity of faith, ſubjoined to his Eccleſiaſtical Polity. Folio Edition.

feebled. He is not able, of himſelf, to think a good thought. He has no viſible ſafeguard, nor any ſufficiency of his own. And yet, whole legions of formidable enemies are combined to compaſs his ruin. The world lays unnumbered ſnares for his feet: the Devil is inceſſantly urging the ſiege, by a multitude of fiery darts, or wily temptations: the fleſh, like a perfidious inmate, under colour of friendſhip, and a ſpecious pretence of pleaſure, is always forward to betray his integrity.——But amidſt all theſe threatening circumſtances of perſonal weakneſs, and imminent danger, an inviſible aid is his defence. "I will uphold thee, ſays the bleſſed GOD, with the right hand of my righteouſneſs*." O comfortable truth! The arm, which fixes the ſtars in their orbits, and guides the planets in their courſe, is ſtretched out to preſerve the heirs of ſalvation.—"My ſheep, adds the great Redeemer, are mine; and they ſhall never periſh; neither ſhall any pluck them out of my hand †." What words are theſe! And did they come from HIM, who hath all power in heaven, and on earth? And were they ſpoke to every unfeigned, though feeble follower, of the great Shepherd? Then Omnipotence itſelf muſt be vanquiſhed; before they can be deſtroyed, either by the ſeductions of fraud, or the aſſaults of violence.

IF you aſk therefore, what ſecurity we have of enduring to the end, and continuing faithfully unto death?——The very ſame that eſtabliſhes the heavens, and ſettles the ordinances of the univerſe. Can theſe be thrown into confuſion ‡? Then may the true believer draw back unto perdition. Can the ſun be diſlodged from his ſphere, and ruſh lawleſly through the ſky? Then, and then only, can the faith of GOD's elect § be finally overthrown.—Be of good courage, then, my ſoul; rely on thoſe divine

* Iſa. xli. 10.
† John x. 28.
‡ Jer. xxxi. 35, 36.
§ Tit. i. 2.

divine ſuccours, which are ſo ſolemnly ſtipulated, ſo faithfully promiſed. Though thy grace be languid, as the glimmering ſpark; though the overflowings of corruption threaten it with total extinction; yet, ſince the great JEHOVAH has undertaken to cheriſh the dim principle, "many waters cannot quench it, nor all floods drown it." Nay though it were feeble as the ſmoaking flax‖, Almighty goodneſs ſtands engaged, to augment the heat; to raiſe the fire, and feed the flame; till it beam forth, a Lamp of immortal Glory, in the heavens.

AND, as to the Faithfulneſs of a covenanting God; this may be emblematically ſeen, in the Stability of the heavenly Bodies, and the Perpetuity of their Motions †.—Thoſe that are fixed continue unalterably in their ſtations. No injurious ſhocks; no violence of conflicting elements, are able to diſplace thoſe everlaſting Hinges, on which dependent

‖ The tenderneſs and faithfulneſs of God to his people, are finely pictured by the prophet Iſaiah, chap. xlii. ver. 3. Which paſſage, becauſe of its rich conſolation, and uncommon beauty, is deſervedly adopted by St. Matthew, and ingrafted into the ſyſtem of evangelical truths.—"He will not himſelf break, nor ſuffer to be broken by any other, the bruiſed reed, nor quench the ſmoaking flax." Was it poſſible, to have choſen two more delicate, and expreſſive repreſentations? Could any image, be more ſignificant of a very infirm, and infeebled faith; than the flexible reed, that bends before every wind: which, beſides its natural weakneſs, is made abundantly weaker by being bruiſed: and ſo, ready to fall in pieces of itſelf?——Nor could any thing, with a more pathetical exactneſs, deſcribe the extreme imbecility, of that other principle of the divine life, love; than the ſtate of the flax, which is but juſt beginning to burn; and, conſequently, liable to be put out by the leaſt blaſt; or rather of the wick of the lamp, when it is not kindled into ſo much as a glimmering flame, but only breathing ſmoak, and uncertain whether it ſhall take fire or no. Matth. xii. 20.

† Pſal. cxix. 89, 90.

ent worlds revolve. Through the whole flight of time, they recede not ſo much as a hair's breadth, from the preciſe central point of their reſpective ſyſtems.———While the Erratic perform their prodigious ſtages, without any intermiſſion, or the leaſt embarraſſment. How ſoon, and how eaſily, is the moſt finiſhed piece of human machinery diſconcerted! But all the celeſtial movements are ſo nicely adjuſted; all their operations ſo critically proportioned; and their mutual dependencies ſo ſtrongly connected; that they prolong their beneficial courſes, throughout all ages. While mighty cities are overwhelmed with ruin, and their very names loſt in oblivion: while vaſt empires are ſwept from their foundations, and leave not ſo much as a ſhadowy trace of their antient magnificence. While all terreſtrial things are ſubject to viciſſitude, and fluctuating in uncertainty: Theſe are permanent in their duration, invariable in their functions; "not one faileth."—Who doubts the conſtant ſucceſſion of day and night, or the regular returns of ſummer and winter? And why, O! why ſhall we doubt the veracity of God, or diſtruſt the accompliſhment of his holy word? Can the ordinances of heaven depart? Then only can God forget to be gracious; or neglect the performance of his promiſe.——Nay, our Lord gives us yet firmer ground of affiance. He affords us a ſurer bottom for our faith, than the fundamental laws of the univerſe. "Heaven and earth, he ſays, may paſs away; but, not one jot or tittle of his word ſhall fall ſhort of his promiſe." His ſacred word, whatever may obſtruct it; whoever may oppoſe it; ſhall be fulfilled to the very uttermoſt.

O powerful word! How aſtoniſhing is its efficacy? When this word was iſſued forth, a thouſand worlds emerged out of nothing. And, ſhould the mighty orders be repeated, a thouſand more would ſpring into exiſtence. By this word the vaſt

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ſyſtem of created things is upheld, in immutable conſtancy: but, ſhould it give command, or ceaſe to exert its energy; the univerſal frame would be diſſolved, and all Nature revert to her original Chaos. And this very word is pledged for the ſafety, the comfort, the happineſs of the Godly. This inviolable, this Almighty word, ſpeaks in all the promiſes of the Goſpel.—How ſtrangely infatuated are our ſouls, that we ſhould value it ſo little! What infidels are we in fact, that we ſhould depend upon it no more! Did it create, whatever has a being; and ſhall it not work faith in our breaſts? Do unnumbered worlds owe their ſupport to this word; and ſhall it not be ſufficient to buoy up our ſouls in troubles, or eſtabliſh them in trials? Is it the life of the univerſe, and ſhall it be a dead letter to mankind?

If I wiſh to be heard, when I implore heavenly bleſſings; is not this privilege moſt clearly made over to my enjoyment, in that well known text, "Aſk, and it ſhall be given you *?"—If I long for the eternal Comforter, to dwell in my heart, and ſanctify my nature; have I not an apparent title to this high prerogative, conferred in that ſweet aſſertive interrogation, "How much more ſhall your heavenly Father, give the Holy Spirit to thoſe that aſk him †?"—If I earneſtly covet the ineſtimable treaſures, that are compriſed in the great Immanuel's mediation; can I have a firmer claim to the noble portion, that is granted in that moſt precious Scripture, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out ‡?"—What aſſurance, of being intereſted in theſe unſpeakable mercies, would I deſire? What form of conveyance; what deed of ſettlement; were it left to my own option, ſhould I chooſe? Here is the word of a King; the King

* Matth. vii. 7. † Luke xi. 13. ‡ John vi. 37.

King immortal and inviſible; all whoſe declarations ‖ are truth itſelf.——If a monarch beſtow immunities on a body of men, and confirm them by an authentic charter; no one controverts, no one queſtions their right to the Royal favours. And why ſhould we ſuſpect the validity of thoſe glorious grants, which are made by the everlaſting Sovereign of Nature; which he has alſo ratified by an oath, and ſealed with the blood of his Son?—— Corporations may be diſfranchiſed, and charters revoked. Even mountains may be removed, and ſtars drop from their ſpheres. But a tenure, founded on the divine promiſe, is unalienably ſecure, is laſting, as eternity itſelf.

We have endeavoured to ſpell out a ſyllable, of the eternal name, in the wonders of the ſky. We have catched a glimpſe, of the Almighty's glory, from the luſtre of innumerable ſtars. But, would we behold all his excellencies, pourtrayed in full perfection; and drawn to the very life; let us attentively conſider the Redeemer.——I obſerve, there are ſome parts of the firmament, in which the ſtars ſeem, as it were, to cluſter. They are ſown thicker, they lie cloſer, than uſual; and ſtrike the eye, with redoubled ſplendor. Like the jewels on a crown, they mingle their beams; and reflect a reciprocal increaſe of brilliancy, on each other.—And is there not ſuch an aſſemblage, ſuch a conſtellation of the divine honours, moſt amiably effulgent in the bleſſed Jeſus?

Does not infinite wiſdom * ſhine, with ſurpaſſing brightneſs, in CHRIST! To the making of a world, there was no obſtacle; but to the ſaving of man,

‖ ——If theſe fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rottenneſs,
And earth's baſis built on ſtubble.
Milt. Comus.

* See the next note.

there ſeemed to be unſurmountable bars. If the rebel is ſuffered to eſcape; where is the inflexible juſtice, which denounces "Death as the wages for ſin?" If the offender is thoroughly pardoned; where is the inviolable veracity, which has ſolemnly declared, "The ſoul that ſinneth, ſhall die?" Theſe awful attributes are ſet in terrible array; and, like an impenetrable battalion, oppoſe the ſalvation of apoſtate mankind. Who can ſuggeſt a method, to abſolve the traiterous race, and yet vindicate the honours of Almighty Sovereignty? This is an intricacy, which the moſt exalted of finite intelligences are unable to clear.—But, behold the unſearchable ſecret revealed! revealed in the wonderful redemption, accompliſhed by a dying Saviour! So plainly revealed, that "He who runs may read;" and even babes underſtand what minds of the deepeſt penetration could not contrive.—The Son of God, taking our nature, obeys the law, and undergoes death, in our ſtead. By this means, the threatened curſe is executed in all its rigour; and free grace is exerciſed, in all its riches. Juſtice maintains its rights, and, with a ſteady hand, adminiſters impartial vengeance; while mercy diſpenſes her pardons, and welcomes the repentant criminal into its tendereſt embraces. Hereby, the ſeemingly thwarting attributes are reconciled; and the ſinner is ſaved, not only in full conſiſtence with the honour of the ſupreme perfections, but to the moſt illuſtrious manifeſtation of them all.

WHERE does the divine power § ſo ſignally exert itſelf, as in the croſs of Chriſt, and in the conqueſts of grace?——Our Lord, in his loweſt ſtate of

§ Chriſt, the wiſdom of God, and the power of God. 1 Cor. i. 24.——To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church" (by the amazing contrivance, circumſtances, and accompliſhment, of its redemption) the deep, extenſive, and (πολυποικιλος) greatly diverſified wiſdom of God. Eph. iii. 10.

of humiliation, gained a more glorious victory; than when, through the dividing ſea, and the waſte howling wilderneſs, he "rode upon his chariots and horſes of ſalvation." When his hands were rivetted, with irons, to the bloody tree; he diſarmed death of its ſting, and plucked the prey from the jaws of hell. Then, even then, while he was crucified in weakneſs, he vanquiſhed the ſtrong man, and ſubdued our moſt formidable enemies: even then, he ſpoiled principalities; triumphed over the powers of darkneſs; and led captivity captive.—And now he is exalted to his heavenly throne, with what a prevailing efficacy does his grace go forth, "conquering, and to conquer!" By this, the Slaves of Sin are reſcued from their bondage, and reſtored to the Liberty of Righteouſneſs. By this, depraved wretches, whoſe appetites were ſenſual, and their diſpoſition deviliſh; are not only renewed, but renewed after the image of God, and made partakers of a Divine Nature. Millions, millions of loſt creatures are ſnatched, by the interpoſition of grace, like brands from the burning; and, tranſlated into everlaſting manſions, ſhine brighter than the ſtars, ſhine bright as the Sun, in the kingdom of their Father.

WOULD you ſee a more compleat diſplay of the divine Purity, than the unſpotted firmament; the ſpangles of heaven; or the golden fountain of day; contemplate the ſame ſacred Being. He is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon. In his immaculate nature; in his heavenly tempers; in his moſt holy life; the moral Perfections of the Deity are repreſented, to the higheſt advantage †.——Hark! how Mercy, with her charming voice, ſpeaks in all He utters.

—See!

† In this ſenſe, that ſaying of our Lord is eminently true, "He that hath ſeen Me, hath ſeen the Father." John xiv. 9.

—See! how benevolence pours her choiceſt ſtores, in all he does.—Did ever compaſſion look ſo amiably ſoft as in thoſe pitying tears; which ſwelled his eyes, and trickled down his cheek, to bedew the rancour of his inveterate enemies?—Was it poſſible for patience to aſſume a form ſo lovely; as that ſweetly-winning conduct, which bore the contradiction of ſinners: which intreated the obſtinate, to be reconciled; beſought the guilty, not to die? —In a word; from other things, we may collect ſome ſcattered rays of JEHOVAH's glory; but in CHRIST they are all united; and beam forth, with the ſtrongeſt radiance, the moſt delightful effulgence. "Out of Sion, and in Sion's great Redeemer, hath GOD appeared in perfect beauty."

SEARCH then, my ſoul, above all other purſuits, ſearch the records of redeeming love. Let theſe be the principal objects of thy ſtudy. Here, employ thyſelf, with the moſt unwearied aſſiduity. ——In theſe are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge ‖. Such wiſdom; as the very angels, are intenſely deſirous, to become more intimately acquainted with †: Such knowledge; as qualifies the

‖ Coloſ. ii. 3.—Not a mean degree, but a treaſure; not one treaſure, but many; not many only, but all treaſures, of true wiſdom, and ſaving knowledge; are in Chriſt, and his glorious goſpel.——The ſuperior excellency of thoſe treaſures ſeems to be finely intimated, in that other expreſſion—αποκεκρυφοι—hid; or laid up, with the utmoſt care, and in a place of the greateſt ſafety. Not left at all adventures, to be ſtumbled upon, by every giddy wanderer; or to fall into the arms, of the yawning ſluggard: but, like jewels of the brighteſt luſtre, or riches of the higheſt value, kept in ſtore to adorn and reward the diligent ſearcher.

† This, I believe, is the import of the apoſtle's language, though it is not a literal tranſlation of——Εις α επιθυμουσιν αγγελοι παρακυψαι. 1 Pet i. 12.—I never had ſo lively an apprehenſion of the beautiful ſignificancy of the laſt word, as when I have attended a diſſection of ſome part of the animal body.

In

the poſſeſſor, if not for offices of dignity on earth, yet for the moſt honourable advancements in the kingdom of heaven. Diſunited from which, all application is but elaborate impertinence; and all ſcience no better than pompous ignorance.—Theſe alſo contain the faultleſs model of duty, and the nobleſt motives to obedience. Nothing ſo powerful, to work a lively faith, and a joyful hope; as an attentive conſideration of our Lord's unutterable merits. Nothing ſo ſovereign, to antidote the peſtilential influence of the world, and deliver our affections from a ſlavery to ignoble objects; as an habitual remembrance of his extreme agonies. The genuine, the ever-fruitful ſource of all morality, is the unfeigned love of CHRIST; and the croſs, the croſs, is the appointed † Altar, from which we may fetch a coal §, to inkindle this ſacred fire.

BEHOLD, therefore, the man; the matchleſs and ſtupendous man; who gave us a pattern of the moſt exalted virtue, and was himſelf the mirror of every divine perfection. Examine the memoirs of his exemplary converſation. Contemplate the choir of

In order to diſcern the minutiæ of the admirable frame; the latent wonders of art and mechaniſm; the eye is ſo ſharpened, and its application ſo intenſely bended, as gives a very juſt experimental comment on that expreſſive phraſe, παρακυψαι —With ſuch earneſt attention, is the everlaſting goſpel contemplated, by the Angelic orders! How much more, if it were poſſible, does it deſerve the devout and inceſſant conſideration of human minds? Since by them, it is not only to be ſpeculated, as a bright and raviſhing diſplay of the divine attributes; but to be applied to their fallen nature, as a moſt benign ſcheme of recovering grace; as the ſure and only method of obtaining life and immortality.

† And I, ſays our Lord, if I be lifted up from the earth, and extended on the croſs, will draw all men unto me; will give ſuch a rich and tranſcendent diſplay of my love, as ſhall conſtitute the moſt powerful and prevailing attractive of theirs. John xii. 32.

§ Alluding to Iſaiah vi. 6.

of graces, which were aſſociated in his mind, and ſhed the higheſt luſtre on all his actions; familiarize to thy thoughts his heavenly diſcourſes, and enter into the very ſpirit of his refined doctrines: get the one transfuſed into thy breaſt, the other tranſcribed in thy life.—Follow him to the laſt ſcene of the moſt innocent and uſeful courſe, that was ever paſſed on earth. Follow him to Calvary's horrid eminence; to Calvary's fatal cataſtrophe. Be thy moſt conſtant attention fixed, on that lovely and ſorrowful ſpectacle. Behold the ſpotleſs victim, nailed to the tree, and ſtabbed to the heart. Hear him pouring out Prayers, for his Murderers; before he poured out his ſoul, for tranſgreſſors. See the wounds that ſtream with forgiveneſs, and bleed Balm for a diſtempered world. O! ſee the juſtice of the Almighty and his goodneſs; his mercy and his vengeance; all his tremendous and gracious attributes manifeſted: manifeſted with inexpreſſible ſplendor, in that moſt ignominious, and yet grandeſt, of tranſactions.

Since God is ſo inconceivably great, as theſe his marvellous works declare;

> Since the great Sov'reign ſends ten thouſand worlds,
> To tell us, He reſides above them all,
> In glory's unapproachable receſs †;

What

† For this quotation, and ſeveral valuable hints, I acknowledge myſelf indebted to thoſe beautiful and ſublime poems, intitled Night-Thoughts.—Of which I ſhall only ſay, That I receive freſh pleaſure, and richer improvement, from every renewed peruſal. And, I think, I ſhall have reaſon to bleſs the indulgent Beſtower of all Wiſdom, for thoſe inſtructive and animating compoſitions, even, in my laſt moments. Than which nothing can more emphatically ſpeak their very ſuperior excellency, nor give a more ſolid ſatisfaction to their worthy

What an honourable, as well as advantageous employ, is prayer? By prayer, we have acceſs to that moſt mighty potentate; whoſe ſcepire ſways univerſal nature, and whoſe rich regalia fill the ſkies with luſtre. Prayer places us in his preſence-chamber; while "the blood of ſprinkling," procures us a gracious audience.—Shall I then bluſh to be found proſtrate, before the throne of grace? Shall I be aſhamed to have it known; that I offer up ſocial ſupplications in the family, or am conſcientious in obſerving my private retirements? Rather, let me glory in this unſpeakable privilege. Let me reckon it the nobleſt poſture, to fall low on my knees before his footſtool; and the higheſt honour, to enjoy communion with his moſt exalted majeſty.——Incomparably more noble, than to ſit in perſon, on the triumphal chariot; or to ſtand, in effigy, amidſt the temple of worthies.

How ineſtimable, in ſuch a view, is that promiſe; which ſo often occurs in the prophetic writings, and is the crowning benefit of the new covenant, I will be thy God †.———Will this ſupremely excellent, and Almighty Being, vouchſafe to be my portion? To ſettle upon a poor ſinner, not the heritage of a county; nor the poſſeſſion of the whole earth; but his own ever-bleſſed Self? May I then, through his free condeſcending grace, and the unknown merits of his Son, look upon all theſe infinitely noble attributes as my treaſure? May I regard the wiſdom, which ſuperintends ſuch a multitude of worlds, as my guide; the power, which produced, and preſerves them in exiſtence, as

worthy author.——Happy ſhould I think myſelf, if theſe little ſketches of contemplative devotion might be honoured with the moſt inferior degree, of the ſame ſucceſs; and receive a teſtimony, not from the voice of fame, but from the dying lips of ſome edified Chriſtian.

† Heb. viii. 10.

as my guard; the goodneſs, which, by an endleſs communication of favours, renders them all ſo many habitations of happineſs, as my exceeding great reward?——What a fund of felicity is included in ſuch a bleſſing? How often does the Iſraelitiſh prince exult in the aſſurance, that this unutterable and boundleſs good is his own? Intereſted in this, he bids defiance to every evil, that can be dreaded; and reſts in certain expectation of every bleſſing, that can be deſired. "The LORD is my light, and my ſalvation; whom then ſhall I fear?" "The LORD," with an air of exultation, he repeats both his affiance and his challenge, "is the ſtrength of my life: of whom then ſhall I be afraid *?" Nothing ſo effectual, as this appropriating faith to inſpire a dignity of mind, ſuperior to tranſitory trifles; or to create a calmneſs of temper, unalarmed by vulgar fears, unappalled by death itſelf. ——The Lord is my ſhepherd, ſays the ſame truly gallant and heroic perſonage: therefore ſhall I lack nothing †. How is it poſſible, he ſhould ſuffer want, who has the All-ſufficient Fulneſs for his ſupply? So long as unerring wiſdom is capable of contriving the means; and irreſiſtable power is able to execute them; ſuch a one cannot fail of being ſafe and happy; whether he continue amidſt the viciſſitudes of time, or depart into the unchangeable eternity.

HERE, let us ſtand a moment, and contemplate this great GOD, together with ourſelves, in a relative view.—If we reflect on the works of material nature, their number incomprehenſible, and their extent unmeaſurable: each of them apart, ſo admirably framed; the connections of the whole, ſo exquiſitely regulated; and all derived, from one and the ſame glorious agent.—If we recollect the far more

* Pſalm xxvii. 1. † Pſalm xxiii. 1.

more noble accompliſhments of elegant taſte, and diſcerning judgment; of refined paſſions, and exalted ſentiments; which are to be found, among the ſeveral orders of underſtanding beings: and all of them flowing, in rich emanations, from the one ſole fountain of intellectual light.—If we farther conſider this Author of material beauty, and moral excellency, as a Guardian, a Governor, and Benefactor to all his creatures; ſupporting their beings, and protecting their perſons, by an ever-watchful providence; preſiding over their affairs, and cauſing all events to terminate in the moſt extenſive good; heaping, with unremitting liberality, his benefits upon every capable object, and making the whole circle of exiſtence a ſeminary of happineſs.——— Is it poſſible for the human heart, under ſuch captivating views, to be indifferent towards this ever-bleſſed original of all good? Can any be ſo immerſed in ſtupidity, as to ſay unto the Almighty ——in the language of an irreligious temper, and licentious life, to ſay? "Depart from us, we implore not thy favor; nor deſire the knowledge of thy ways."——Wonder, O heavens! be amazed, O earth! and let all the inhabitants of both join their aſtoniſhment, at this unparalleled complication of diſingenuous, ungrateful, and deſtructive perverſeneſs!

If we conſider our own imperfect ſtate; frail in our bodies; enfeebled in our minds; in every part of our conſtitution, and in all the occurrences of life, "like a tottering wall, or a broken hedge;" if we ſurvey our indigent ſtate; without holineſs; without happineſs; our poſſeſſion of preſent conveniences, entirely dependent on God's ſovereign pleaſure; yea, forfeited, juſtly forfeited, with every future hope, by a thouſand aggravated iniquities——If we add the various diſaſters of our condition; agitated by tumultuous paſſions; oppreſſed

oppreſſed with diſpiriting fears; held in ſuſpenſe by a variety of perplexing * cares; liable to pains, and expoſed to troubles; troubles, from every quarter; troubles, of every kind;——Can we, amidſt ſo many wants, under ſuch deplorable infirmities, and ſubject to ſuch diſaſtrous accidents,——can we be unconcerned, whether God's omnipotent hand, and uncontroulable will, be againſt us, or for us? Imagination itſelf ſhudders at the thought!—Can we reſt ſatisfied, without a well-grounded perſuaſion, that we are reconciled to this ſupreme Lord, and the objects of his unchangeable goodneſs?—If there be an abandoned wretch, whoſe apprehenſions are ſo fatally blinded; who is ſo utterly loſt to all ſenſe of his duty, and of his intereſt: let me bewail his miſery; while I abhor his impiety. Bewail his miſery; though popularity, with her choiceſt laurels, adorn his brow; though affluence, with her richeſt delicacies, load his table; though half a nation, or half a world, conſpire to call him happy.

MAY

* All that are converſant with the original language of the New Teſtament are ſufficiently appriſed that this is the ſignificancy of that important diſſuaſive, urged by our Lord; μη μεριμνατε, Mat. vi. 25.—I beg leave, for the ſake of the unlearned reader, to obſerve; That our tranſlation, though for the moſt part faithful and excellent, has hereſlipt into a very great impropriety, and miſrepreſented our divine Maſter's meaning, "Take no thought for your body," is not only not the true ſenſe, but the very reverſe of the ſcriptural doctrine. We are required to take a prudent and moderate thought, for the neceſſaries of life. The ſluggard, who neglects this decent precaution, is ſeverely reprimanded; is ſent to one of the meaneſt animals, to bluſh for his folly, and learn diſcretion from her conduct, Prov. vi. 6. Our Saviour's precept, and the exact ſenſe of his expreſſion, is, Take no anxious thought; indulge no perplexing care; no ſuch care, as may argue an unreaſonable diſtruſt of Providence; or may rend and tear your minds with diſtreſſing, with pernicious ſolicitude.

MAY I, by a believing application, ſolace myſelf in this everlaſting ſource of love, perfection, and joy! Grant me this requeſt, and I aſk no more.—Only, that I may expect, not with a reluctant anxiety, but with a ready chearfulneſs, the arrival of that important hour; when this veil of fleſh ſhall drop, and all the ſhadows of mortality flee away. When I ſhall no longer complain of obſcure knowledge; languid affections; and imperfect fruition.—But, ſhall ſee the uncreated and immortal Majeſty; ſee him, not in this diſtant and unaffecting method, of reaſoning from his works; but with the moſt clear and direct intuition of the mind.——When I ſhall love him, not with a cold and contracted ſpirit; but with the moſt lively and inlarged emotions of gratitude.——When I ſhall abundantly enjoy the light of his countenance; and be united, intimately, inſeparably, united to his all-glorious Godhead.—Take, ye ambitious, un-envied and unoppoſed, take to yourſelves the toys of ſtate. May I be enabled to rejoice in this bleſſed hope; and to triumph in that amiable, that adorable, that delightful name, the LORD MY GOD! And I ſhall ſcarce beſtow a thought, on the ſplendid pageantry of the world; unleſs it be to deſpiſe its empty pomp, and to pity its deluded admirers.

ALL theſe bodies, though immenſe in their ſize, and almoſt infinite in their multitude, are obedient to the divine command. The God of wiſdom "telleth their numbers," and is intimately acquainted with their various properties. The God of power "calleth them all by their names," and aſſigns them whatſoever office he pleaſes.—He marſhals all the ſtarry legions with infinitely greater eaſe, and nicer order, than the moſt expert General arranges his diſciplined troops. He appoints their poſts; he marks their route; he fixes the time for their return. The poſts, which he appoints, they occupy, without

without fail. In the rout, which he ſettles, they perſevere, without the leaſt deviation. And are punctual to the inſtant *, which he fixes for their return. —He has given them a law, which, through a long revolution of ages, ſhall not be broken; unleſs his ſovereign will interpoſes for its repeal. Then indeed their motions are controuled; their action is ſuſpended; and their influence ſealed up.—The ſun at his creation received a command to travel through the heavens. Since which, he has conſtantly performed the great circuit; and "rejoiced as a giant, to run his race." But, when it was requiſite to ſubſerve the purpoſes of divine love, the orders, are countermanded; the flaming courier ſtops his career; "ſtands ſtill in Gibeon †;" and, for the conveniency of the choſen people, holds back the falling day. ——The moon too was diſpatched with a charge, never to intermit her revolving motion, till day and night come to an end. But, when the children of Providence were to be favoured with an uncommon continuation of light, ſhe halts in her march; makes a ſolemn pauſe in the valley of Ajalon ‡; and delays

* "The planets, and all the innumerable hoſt of heavenly bodies, perform their courſes and revolutions, with ſo much certainty and exactneſs, as never once to fail; but, for almoſt 6000 years, come conſtantly about to the ſame period, in the hundredth part of a minute." Stackhouſe's Hiſt. Bib.

† This is ſpoken in conformity to the Scripture language, and according to the common notion. With reſpect to the power which affected the alteration; it is much the ſame thing, and alike miraculous: whether the ſun, or the earth, be ſuppoſed to move.

‡ Joſh. x. 12, 13.——The prophet Habakkuk, according to his lofty manner, celebrates this event; and points out, in very poetical diction, the deſign of ſo ſurpriſing a miracle. "The ſun and moon ſtood ſtill in their habitations:" In the light, the long-continued and miraculous light, thy arrows, edged with deſtruction walked on their awful errand; in the clear ſhining of the day, protracted for this very purpoſe, thy glittering ſpear, launched by the people, but guided by thy hand, ſprung to its prey. Hab. iii. 11.

delays to bring on her attendant train of ſhadows.—When the enemies of the Lord are to be diſcomfited, the ſtars likewiſe are levied into the ſervice; the ſtars are armed, and take the field; "the ſtars in their courſes, fought againſt Siſera ¶."

So dutiful is material nature; ſo obſequious, in all her forms, to her Creator's pleaſure!—The bellowing thunders liſten to his voice; and the vollied lightnings obſerve the direction of his eye. The flying ſtorm, and impetuous whirlwind, wear his yoke. The raging waves revere his nod: they ſhake the earth, and daſh the ſkies; yet never offer to paſs the bounds, which he has ſet.—Even the planetary ſpheres; though vaſtly larger than this wide extended earth; are, in his hand, as clay in the hands of the potter: Though, far ſwifter than the northern blaſt, they ſweep the long tracts of æther; yet are they guided by his reins, and preciſely execute whatever he enjoins.—All thoſe enormous globes of central fire, which beam through the boundleſs azure; in compariſon of which, an army of planets were like

¶ Judges v. 20. The ſcripture-phraſe 'fought againſt,' will, I hope, be a proper warrant for every expreſſion, I have uſed on this occaſion.—The paſſage is generally ſuppoſed to ſignify, that ſome very dreadful meteors (which the ſtars were thought to influence); ſuch as fierce flaſhes of lightning; impetuous ſhowers of rain; and rapid ſtorms of hail; were employed by the Almighty to terrify, annoy, and overthrow the enemies of Iſrael. If ſo, there cannot be a more clear and lively paraphraſe on the text, than thoſe fine lines of a Jewiſh writer—"His ſevere wrath ſhall he ſharpen for a ſword; and the world ſhall fight with him againſt the ungodly. Then ſhall the right-aiming thunderbolts go abroad; and from the clouds as from a well-drawn bow ſhall they fly to the mark. And hail-ſtones, full of wrath, ſhall be caſt as out of a ſtone bow: and the water of the ſea ſhall rage againſt them; and the floods (as was the caſe with the river Kiſhon) ſhall cruelly drown them. Yea a mighty wind ſhall ſtand up againſt them; and, like a ſtorm ſhall blow them away." Wiſdom v. 20, 21, 22, 23.

like a ſwarm of ſummer inſects; thoſe, even thoſe, are conformable to his will, as the melting wax to the impreſſed ſeal.——And if all, ALL is obedient, throughout the whole aſcent of things, ſhall man be the only rebel? Shall our unruly appetites reject the government of Almighty goodneſs? Shall theſe headſtrong paſſions break looſe from divine reſtraint; and run wild, in exorbitant ſallies, after their own imaginations?

O MY ſoul, be ſtung with remorſe, and overwhelmed with confuſion, at ſuch a thought! Is it not a righteous thing, that the bleſſed God ſhould ſway the ſceptre, with the moſt abſolute authority, over all the creatures, which his power has formed? Eſpecially over thoſe creatures; whom his diſtinguiſhing favour has endued with the noble principle of reaſon, and made capable of a bliſsful immortality! Sure, if all the ranks of inanimate exiſtence ſubmit to their Maker's decree by the neceſſity of their nature; this more excellent race of beings, ſhould pay their equal homage, by the willing compliance of their affections *.—

Come

* This argument, I acknowledge, is not abſolutely concluſive: But it is popular and ſtriking. Nor can I think myſelf obliged, in ſuch a work; where fancy bears a conſiderable ſway to proceed always, with the caution and exactneſs of a diſputer in the ſchools. If there be ſome appearance of analogy, between the fact and the inference, it ſeems ſufficient for my purpoſe; though the deduction ſhould not be neceſſary, or ſtrictly ſyllogiſtical.——One of the apoſtolic fathers, has an affecting and truly ſublime paragraph, which runs intirely in this form; Ηλιος τε και σεληνη, αστερων τε χορoι, κατα την διαταγην αυτε εν ομονοια διχα πασης παρεκβασεως, εξελισσουσιν τας επιτεταγμενας αυτοις οριομας. The ſun, the moon, and the ſtarry choir, without the leaſt deviation, and with the utmoſt harmony, perform the revolutions appointed them by the ſupreme decree. From which Remark, and abundance of other ſimilar inſtances, obſervable in the œconomy of nature; he exhorts chriſtians, to a cordial unanimity among themſelves, and a dutiful

Come then, all ye faculties of my mind; come, all ye powers of my body; give up yourſelves, without a moment's delay, without the leaſt reſerve, to his governance. Stand like dutiful ſervants, at his footſtool; in an everlaſting readineſs, to do whatſoever he requires: to be whatſoever he appoints: To further, with united Efforts, the purpoſes of his Glory in this earthly ſcene: or elſe to ſeparate, without reluctance, at his ſummons; the one to ſleep in the ſilent duſt; the other, to advance his honour, in ſome remoter colony of his kingdom.——Thus, may I join with all the works of the LORD, in all Places of his dominion, to recognize his univerſal ſupremacy; and proclaim him Sovereign of ſouls, as well as ruler of worlds.

AT my firſt coming abroad, all thoſe luminaries were totally eclipſed, by the overpowering luſtre of the ſun. They were all placed in the very ſame ſtations; and played the ſame ſprightly Beams; yet, not one was ſeen. As the Daylight wore away and the ſober ſhades advanced; Heſperus, that leads the ſtarry train, diſcloſed his radiant forehead, and catched my eye. While I ſtood gazing, on his bright and beautiful aſpect, others peeped thro' the blue curtains. Scarce had I turned to obſerve, theſe freſh emanations of ſplendor; but others dropt the veil; others ſtole into view, when lo! faſter and more numerous, multitudes ſprung from obſcurity; they poured, in ſhining troops, and in ſweet confuſion, over all the cærulean plain; till the firmament ſeemed, like one vaſt conſtellation; and a flood of glory burſt from all the ſkies.

Is not ſuch the riſe, and ſuch the progreſs, of a true converſion; in the prejudiced infidel, or inat-

dutiful obedience to God. Vid. Clem. Roman 1. Ep. ad Corinth. Sect. 20.—See alſo a beautiful Ode in Dr. Watts's Lyric Poems, intituled, The Compariſon and Complaint, which turns entirely upon this very thought.

tentive ſinner? In the period of his vainer years, a thouſand intereſting truths lay utterly undiſcovered; a thouſand momentous concerns were intirely diſregarded. But, when divine grace diſſipates the deluſive glitter, which dazzled his underſtanding, or beguiled his affections; then he begins to diſcern, dimly to diſcern, the things that belong to his peace. Some powerful admonition of ſcripture, darts conviction into his mind; as the rays of a ſtar pierce the gloom of night. Then, perhaps, another awful or chearing text flings terror, or diffuſes comfort; a threatning alarms his fears, or a promiſe awakens his hopes. This, poſſibly, is ſucceeded by ſome very impreſſive diſpenſation of Providence; or improved by ſome edifying, and inſtructive converſation. All which is faſtened, as to its continuance; and inlarged, as to its influence; by a diligent ſtudy of the ſacred word. By this means, new truths continually pour their evidence; new ſcenes of refined and exalted, but hitherto unknown delight, addreſs him with their attractives. New deſires take wing; new purſuits are ſet on foot. A new ſet of tempers actuates his heart; a new habit of converſation regulates his life. Old things are paſſed away, and, "He, that was ſometime darkneſs, is now light, and life, and joy in the LORD."

THE more attentively I view the cryſtal concave, the greater number of luminaries I diſcern. Abundance of minuter lights, that lay concealed from a ſuperficial notice, are viſible on a cloſer examination; eſpecially in thoſe tracts of the ſky, which are called the galaxy; and are diſtinguiſhable, by a ſort of milky path. There, they are crouded rather than diſſeminated. The region ſeems to be all on a blaze, with their blended rays. They ſhine thick as dew-drops, on the face of the morning.—Beſides this vaſt profuſion, which the prying eye diſcovers;

were

were I to make my ſurvey, from any other part of the globe, that lies nearer the Southern Pole; I ſhould behold a new choir of ſtarry bodies, which have never appeared in our hemiſphere:—— And were I, either here or there, to view the firmament with the virtuoſo's glaſs; I ſhould find a prodigious multitude of flaming orbs, that, immerſed in depths of Æther, eſcape the keeneſt unaſſiſted ſight *.——And yet in theſe various ſituations; even with the aid of the teleſcopic tube, I ſhould not be able to deſcry the half, perhaps not a thouſandth part, of thoſe illuſtrious bodies, which the vaſt expanſive Heavens contain †.——So, the more diligently I purſue my ſearch, into thoſe oracles of eternal truth, the ſcriptures; I perceive a wider, a deeper, an ever increaſing fund of ſpiritual treaſures. I perceive the diviner ſtrokes of wiſdom, and the richer diſplays of goodneſs; the more tranſcendent excellency of the Meſſiah, and a more deplorable vileneſs in fallen man; a more immaculate purity in GOD's law, and more precious Privileges in his goſpel. And yet, after a courſe of ſtudy, ever ſo aſſiduous; ever ſo prolonged; I ſhould have reaſon to own myſelf a mere babe in heavenly

* Come forth, O man, yon azure Round ſurvey,
And view thoſe lamps, which yield eternal Day:
Bring forth thy glaſſes: Clear thy wond'ring eyes:
Millions beyond the former millions riſe:
Look farther:—Millions more blaze from remoter Skies.

† How noble, conſidered in this View, are the Celebrations of the Divine Majeſty, which frequently occur in the ſacred Writings! "It is the LORD that made the Heavens." Pſal. xcvi. 5.—What a prodigious Dignity does ſuch a Senſe of Things give, to that devout Aſcription of praiſe! "Thou, even Thou, art LORD alone; Thou haſt made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens, with all their Hoſt." Nehem. xi. 6.—— And how inimitably ſublime is that beautiful Climax, in the inſpired Hymn! "Praiſe HIM, Sun and Moon; Praiſe Him, all ye ſtars of Light: Praiſe Him, ye Heaven of Heavens." Pſal. cxlviii. 3, 4.

knowledge; or, at moſt, but a puerile proficient in the ſchool of CHRIST.

After all my moſt accurate inſpection, thoſe ſtarry orbs appear but as glittering Points; and even the planets, though ſo much nearer our earthly manſion, ſeem not to exceed the ſize of flaming bullets. If then, we have ſuch imperfect apprehenſions, of viſible and material things; how much more ſcanty and inadequate muſt be our notions, of inviſible and immortal objects!—We behold the ſtars; and, though every one is incomparably bigger than this whole earth; yet they dwindle, upon our ſurvey, into the moſt diminutive Forms. Thus we ſee by faith the glories of the bleſſed JESUS; the atoning efficacy of his death; the juſtifying merit of his righteouſneſs; and the joys, which are reſerved for the godly. But alas! even our moſt exalted ideas are vaſtly below the truth: As much below the truth; as the report, which our eyes make of thoſe celeſtial edifices, is inferior to their real Grandeur.—Should we take in all the magnifying aſſiſtances, which art has contrived; thoſe luminous bodies would elude our Skill, and ſeem as ſmall as ever. Should an inhabitant of earth travel towards the cope of Heaven; and be carried forwards in his æreal journey, more than a hundred and ſixty millions of miles *; even in that advanced ſituation, thoſe oceans of flame would look no larger than radiant ſpecks.——In like manner, conceive ever ſo magnificently of the Redeemer's honours; and of the bliſs, which he has purchaſed for his people; yet

* This, incredible as it may ſeem, is not a mere Suppoſition; but a real Fact. For, about the Tenth of December, we are above 160,000,000 of Miles nearer the northern Parts of the Sky, than we were at the Tenth of June. And yet, with regard to the Stars ſituate in that Quarter, we perceive no Change in their Aſpect, nor any Augmentation of their Magnitude.

yet you will fall ſhort. Raiſe your imagination higher; ſtretch your invention wider; give them all the ſcope, that a ſoaring and excurſive Fancy can take; ſtill your conceptions will be extremely diſproportionate, to their genuine perfection.—Vaſt are the bodies, which roll in the expanſe of heaven; vaſter far are thoſe fields of Æther, through which they run their endleſs rounds; but the excellency of JESUS, and the happineſs laid up for his ſervants, are greater than either; than both; than all. An inſpired writer calls one, "The unſearchable riches of CHRIST;" and ſtyles the other, "an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory."

IF thoſe ſtars are ſo many inexhauſtible magazines of fire, and immenſe reſervoirs of light; there is no reaſon to doubt, but they have ſome very grand uſes, ſuitable to the magnificence of their nature. To ſpecify, or explain, the particular Purpoſes they anſwer; is altogether impoſſible, in our preſent ſtate of diſtance and ignorance. This, however, we may clearly diſcern; that they are diſpoſed in ſuch a manner, as is moſt pleaſing, and ſerviceable, to mankind.——They are not placed at ſuch an infinite Remove, as to lie beyond our ſight; neither are they brought ſo near our abode, as to annoy us with their beams. We ſee them ſhine on every ſide; and the deep azure, that ſerves them as a ground, heightens their ſplendor. But their influence is gentle, and their rays are deſtitute of heat. So that we are favoured with the view of a multitude of fiery globes; without any riſque, either to the coolneſs of our night, or the quiet of our repoſe.——Who can ſufficiently admire that immenſe benignity; which, on our account, ſtrews the earth with Bleſſings of every Kind; and vouchſafes to make the very heavens ſubſervient to our Delight?

BUT,

But, it is not ſolely to adorn the roof of our palace, with coſtly gildings; that God commands the celeſtial luminaries, to glitter through the gloom. We alſo reap conſiderable benefits, from their miniſtry.——They divide our Time, and fix its ſolemn periods. They ſettle the order of our works; and are, according to the deſtination mentioned in ſacred writ, "for ſigns, and for ſeaſons; for days, and for years." The returns of heat and cold alone would have been too precarious a rule. But theſe radiant bodies; by the variation, and alſo by the regularity, of their motions; afford a method of calculating, abſolutely certain, and ſufficiently obvious. By this, the Farmer is inſtructed, when to commit his grain to the furrows, and how to conduct the operations of huſbandry. By this, the ſailor knows when to proceed on his voyage, with leaſt peril; and how to carry on the buſineſs of navigation, with moſt ſucceſs.

Why ſhould not the Chriſtian, the probationer for eternity, learn from the ſame monitors, to number, for nobler purpoſes, his days; and duly to tranſact the grand, grand affairs, of his final ſalvation? Since God has appointed ſo many bright meaſures of our time, to determine its larger periods, and to minute down its ordinary ſtages; ſure, this moſt ſtrongly inculcates its value, and ſhould powerfully prompt us to improve it.——Behold! the ſupreme Lord marks the progreſs of our life, in that moſt conſpicuous kalendar above. And does not ſuch an ordination tell us, in the moſt emphatical language, that it is given for uſe, not for waſte? That no portion of it is delivered, but under a ſtrict account; that all of it is entered, as it paſſes, in the divine regiſter; and, therefore, that the ſtewards of ſuch a talent, are to expect a future reckoning?——Behold! the very heavens

are

are bidden to be the accomptants of our years, and months, and days. O! may this induce us to manage them, with a vigilant frugality; to part with them, as miſers with their hoarded treaſure, warily and circumſpectly; and, if poſſible, as merchants with their rich commodities, not without their equivalent, either in perſonal improvement or ſocial uſefulneſs!

How bright the ſtarry diamonds ſhine! The ambition of eaſtern monarchs could imagine no diſtinction, more noble and ſublime, than that of being likened to thoſe beaming orbs †.——They form night's richeſt dreſs; and ſparkle upon her ſable robe, like jewels of the fineſt luſtre. Like jewels! I wrong their character. The lucid ſtone has no brilliancy; quenched is the flame even of the golden topaz; compared with thoſe glowing decorations of heaven.—How widely are their radiant honours diffuſed! No nation ſo remote, but ſees their beauty, and rejoices in their uſefulneſs. They have been admired by all preceding generations; and every riſing age will gaze on their charms, with renewed delight.——How animating, then, is that promiſe, made to the faithful miniſters of the goſpel! "They that turn many to righteouſneſs, ſhall ſhine as the ſtars for ever and ever ‡." Is not this a moſt winning encouragement, "to ſpend and be ſpent," in the ſervice of ſouls? Methink, the ſtars beckon, as they twinkle. Methinks, they ſhew me their ſplendors, on purpoſe to awaken my alacrity, in the race ſet before me; on purpoſe to enliven my activity, in the work that is given me to do.—If honour has any charms; if true glory, the glory which cometh from God, is any attractive; there cannot be a more powerful incitement, to exerciſe

† Numb. xxiv. 17. Dan. viii. 10.
‡ Dan. xii. 3.

ciſe all aſſiduity in my holy vocation. Therefore, when zeal becomes languid; let me have recourſe to theſe lamps of heaven; and rekindle its ardor, at their inextinguiſhable fires.

Of the Polar Star, it is obſervable; that, while other luminaries alter their ſituation, this ſeems invariably fixed *. While other luminaries, now, mount the battlements of heaven, and appear upon duty; now, retire beneath the horizon, and reſign, to a freſh ſet, the watches of the night; this never departs from its nation. This, in every ſeaſon, maintains an uniform poſition; and is always to be found, in the ſame tract of the northern ſky.——How often has this beamed bright intelligence on the ſailor; and conducted the keel to its deſired haven! In early ages, thoſe that went down to the ſea in ſhips, and occupied their buſineſs in great waters, had ſcarce any other ſure guide for their wandring veſſel. This therefore they viewed, with the moſt ſolicitous attention. By this, they formed their obſervations, and regulated their voyage. When this was obſcured by clouds, or inveloped in miſts; the trembling mariner was bewildered, on the watery waſte. His thoughts fluctuated, as much as the floating ſurge; and he knew not where he was advanced, or whither he ſhould ſteer. But when this auſpicious ſtar broke though the gloom; it diſſipated the anxiety of his mind, and cleared up his dubious paſſage. He re-aſſumed, with alacrity, the management of the helm; and was able to ſhape his courſe, with ſome tolerable degree of ſatisfaction and certainty.

Such,

* I ſpeak in conformity to the appearance of the object. For, though this remarkable ſtar revolves round the pole, its motion is ſo ſlow, and the circle it deſcribes ſo ſmall; as render both the revolution, and change of ſituation, hardly perceivable.

SUCH, only much clearer in its light, and much ſurer in its direction, is the holy word of God, to thoſe myriads of intellectual Beings, who are bound for the eternal ſhores: and, imbarked in a veſſel of frail fleſh, are to paſs the waves of this perilous world. In all difficulties, theſe ſacred pages ſhed an encouraging ray; in all uncertainties, they ſuggeſt the right determination, and point out a proper procedure. And, what is ſtill a more ineſtimable advantage; they, like the ſtar which conducted the eaſtern Sages, make plain our way to the Redeemer. They diſplay his unſpeakable merits; diſcover the method of being intereſted in his atonement; and lead the weary ſoul, toſſed by troubles, and ſhattered by temptations, to that only harbour of peaceful repoſe.—Let us, therefore, attend to this unerring directory, with the ſame conſtancy of regard, as the ſeafaring man obſerves his compaſs. Let us become as thoroughly acquainted with this ſacred chart, as the pilot is with every truſty mark, that gives notice of a lurking rock; and with every open road, that yields a ſafe paſſage into the port. Above all, let us commit ourſelves to this infallible guidance, with the ſame implicit reſignation; let us conform to its divine precepts, with the ſame ſedulous care; as the children of Iſrael, when, ſojourning in the trackleſs deſart, followed the pillar of fire, and the motions of the miraculous cloud.—So, will it introduce us, not into an earthly Canaan, flowing with milk and honey; but into an immortal paradiſe, where is the fulneſs of joy, and where are pleaſures for evermore. It will introduce us into thoſe happy, happy regions, where our ſun ſhall no more go down, nor our moon withdraw itſelf; for the Lord ſhall be our everlaſting light, and the days of our mourning, together with the fatigues of our pilgrimage, ſhall be ended *.

I PERCEIVE

* Iſa. lx. 20.

I PERCEIVE a great variety, in the ſize and ſplendor of thoſe gems of heaven. Some are of the firſt magnitude, others, of an inferior order. Some glow with intenſe flames; others glimmer with fainter beams. Yet, all are beautiful; all have their peculiar luſtre, and diſtinct uſe; all tend, in their different degrees, to enamel the cope of heaven, and embroider the robe of night.——This circumſtance is remarked by an author, whoſe ſentiments are a ſource of wiſdom, and the very ſtandard of truth. "One ſtar, ſays the apoſtle of the Gentiles, differeth from another ſtar in glory; ſo alſo is the reſurrection of the dead."

IN the world above, are various degrees of happineſs, various ſeats of honour. Some will riſe to more illuſtrious diſtinctions, and richer joys *. Some, like veſſels of ample capacity, will admit more copious acceſſions of light and excellence. And yet, there will be no want, no deficiency, in any; but a fulneſs both of divine ſatisfactions, and perſonal perfection. Each will enjoy all the good; and be adorned with all the glory; that his heart can wiſh, or his condition receive.——None will know what it is to envy. Not the leaſt malevolence; not the leaſt ſelfiſhneſs; but everlaſting friendſhip prevails, and a mutual complacency in each other's delight. Love, cordial love, will give every particular ſaint a participation of all the fruitions §; that are diffuſed thro' the whole aſſembly of the bleſſed.—None will eclipſe, but rather reflect light upon, another. A ſweet interchange

* 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. The great Mr. Mede prefers the ſenſe here given, and the learned Dr. Hammond admits it, into his paraphraſe. Whoſe joint authority, though far from excluding any other, yet is a ſufficient warrant for this application of the words.

§ Tolle invidiam, & tuum eſt quod habeo: Tolle invidiam, & meum eſt quod habes. Auguſtine.

change of rays ſubſiſt; all enlightened by the great fountain, and all enlightening one another. By which reciprocal communications of pleaſure and amity, each will be continually receiving from; each inceſſantly adding to; the general felicity.

HAPPY, ſupremely happy they, who obtain the moſt humble portion in the celeſtial manſions. Better to be a door-keeper in thoſe "Ivory pa-"laces †," than to fill the moſt gorgeous throne on earth. The very loweſt place at God's right-hand is diſtinguiſhed honour, and conſummate delight.—O!. that we may anticipate ſomething of that bliſsful ſtate, while we remain in our baniſhment below! May we by rejoicing in the ſuperior proſperity of another, make it our own! And, provided the general reſult is harmony, be content, be pleaſed, with whatſoever part is aſſigned to our ſhare, in the univerſal choir of affairs.

WHILE I am conſidering the heavenly bodies, I muſt not intirely forget thoſe fundamental laws of our modern aſtronomy, projection, and attraction. One of which is the all-combining cement, the other is the over-operative ſpring, of the mighty Frame.—In the beginning, the all-creating Fiat impreſſed a proper degree of motion, on each of thoſe whirling orbs. Which, if not controuled, would have carried them on, in ſtrait lines, and to endleſs lengths; till they were even loſt, in the abyſs of ſpace. But, the gravitating property, being added to the projectile force, determined their courſes to a circular § form; and obliged the reluctant

† Pſalm. xlv. 8.

§ I am aware, the planetary orbits are not ſtrictly circular, but rather elliptical. However, as they are but a ſmall remove from the perfectly rotund figure; and partake of it incomparably more than the trajectories of the comets; I chooſe to repreſent the thing in this view. Eſpecially, becauſe the notion of

luctant rovers, to perform their deſtined rounds. ——Were either of thoſe cauſes to ſuſpend their action, all the harmoniouſly moving ſpheres would degenerate into torpid maſſes; and falling into the central fire be burnt to aſhes: Or, elſe, would exorbitate into wild confuſion; and each, by the rapidity of its whirl, be diſſipated into atoms. But the impulſives and attractive energy, being moſt nicely attempered to each other; and, under the immediate operation of the Almighty, exerting themſelves in perpetual concert; the various globes run their radiant races, without the leaſt interruption or deviation. So as to create the alternate changes, of day and night; and diſtribute the uſeful viciſſitudes, of ſucceeding ſeaſons. So as to anſwer all the great ends of a gracious providence; and procure every comfortable convenience, for univerſal nature.

Does not this conſtitution of the material very naturally lead the thoughts, to thoſe grand principles of the moral and devotional world, faith and love?—Theſe are often celebrated by the inſpired apoſtle, as a comprehenſive ſummary of the goſpel *. Theſe inſpirit the breaſt, and regulate the progreſs, of each private Chriſtian. Theſe unite the whole congregation of the faithful to God, and one

of a circle is ſo much more intelligible to the generality of readers, than that of an ellipſis: and becauſe I laid it down for a rule, not to admit any ſuch abſtruſe ſentiment or barbarous expreſſion, as ſhould demand a painful attention, inſtead of raiſing an agreeable idea. For which reaſon, I have avoided technical terms; have taken no notice of Jupiter's ſatellites, or Saturn's ring; have not ſo much as mentioned the names of the planets, nor attempted to wade into any depths of the ſcience; leſt to thoſe that have had no opportunity of uſing the teleſcope, or of acquainting themſelves with a ſyſtem of aſtronomy, I ſhould propound riddles, rather than entertaining and edifying truths.

* Col. i. 4. Philem. ver. 5.

one another: To God, the great centre, in the bonds of gratitude and duty; to one another, by a reciprocal intercourſe of brotherly affections, and friendly offices.——If you aſk, Why it is impoſſible for the true believer, to live at all adventures? to ſtagnate, in a liſtleſs inactivity; or to indulge the extravagant excurſions, of lawleſs inclinations?—It is owing to "his faith, working by love §." He verily truſts, that Chriſt has ſuſtained the infamy, and endured the torment, due to his ſins. He firmly relies on that divine propitiation, for the pardon of all his guilt; and humbly expects everlaſting ſalvation, as the purchaſe of his Saviour's merits. This produces ſuch a ſet of grateful ſentiments, and ſuch a ſpirit of unfeigned thankfulneſs, as animate his whole behaviour. He cannot run to exceſs of riot; becauſe love to his adorable Redeemer, like a ſtrong but ſilken curb, ſweetly reſtrains him. He cannot, he cannot lie lulled into lethargic indolence: becauſe love to the ſame infinite benefactor like a pungent, but endearing ſpur, pleaſingly excites him.——In a word; Faith ſupplies the powerful impulſe, while love gives the determining biaſs; and leads the willing feet, through the whole circle of God's commandments. By the united efficacy of theſe heavenly graces, the Chriſtian conduct is preſerved in the uniformity and beauty of holineſs; as by the blended power of thoſe Newtonian principles, the ſolar ſyſtem revolves, in a ſteady and magnificent regularity.

How admirable, how extenſive, how diverſified is the force, of this ſingle principle of attraction ‖! ——This penetrates the very eſſence of all bodies, and diffuſes itſelf to the remoteſt limits of the mundane ſyſtem.———By this, the vaſt worlds of matter hang ſelf-balanced on their centre; and, though

§ Gal. v. 6.

‖ I mean the attraction both of Gravitation, and Coheſion.

though orbs of immenſe magnitude, require nothing, but this amazing property, for their ſupport. To this we aſcribe a phænomenon, of a very different kind, the preſſure of the atmoſphere: which, though a yielding and expanſive fluid; yet, conſtipated by an attractive energy; ſurrounds the whole Globe, and incloſes every creature, as it were with a tight bandage. An expedient this abſolutely neceſſary to preſerve the texture of our bodies; and indeed, to maintain every ſpecies of animal exiſtence.——Urged by this wonderful impetus, the rivers circulate, with a never-failing current, along the veins of the earth; rolling, with torrent rapture, down the ſteeps, or ſoftly ebbing through the plains. Impelled by the ſame myſterious force, the nutritious juices are detached from the ſoil; and aſcending the trees, find their way through millions of the fineſt meanders, in order to tranſfuſe vegetative life into all the branches.——This confines the Ocean, within proper bounds: Though the waves thereof roar; though they toſs themſelves, with all the madneſs of indignant rage; yet, checked by this potent, this inevitable curb, they are unable to paſs even the ſlighteſt barrier of ſand. To this the mountains owe that unſhaken firmneſs, which laughs at the ſhock of careering winds; and bids the tempeſt, with all its mingled horrors, impotently rave.——By virtue of this inviſible mechaniſm; without the aid of crane or pulley, or any inſtrument of human device; many thouſand tons of water are raiſed, every moment, into the regions of the firmament. By this, they continue, ſuſpended in thin air, without any capacious ciſtern to contain their ſubſtance; or any maſſy pillars to ſuſtain their weight. By this ſame variouſly acting power, they drop down again in gentle falls of dew, or are precipitated in copious ſhowers of rain; they ſlide into the fields in fleecy

flights

flights of ſnow, or are darted upon the houſes in clattering ſtorms of hail.———This occaſions the ſtrong coheſion of ſolid bodies: without which, our large machines could exert themſelves with no vigour; and the nicer utenſils of life would elude our expectations of ſervice. This affords a foundation, for all thoſe delicate or noble mechanic arts; which furniſh mankind with numberleſs conveniencies, both of ornament and delight.—In ſhort; this is the prodigious ballaſt, which compoſes the Æquilibrium, and conſtitutes the ſtability of things: this, the great chain, which forms the connexion of univerſal nature; and the mighty engine, which prompts, facilitates, and, in good meaſure, accompliſhes almoſt all her operations.—O! what complicated effects, from a ſingle cauſe †! What profuſion, amidſt frugality; and unknown profuſion of benefits, with the utmoſt frugality of expence!

And what is this attraction! Is it a quality, in its exiſtence, inſeparable from matter; and, in its acting, independent on the DEITY?—Quite the reverſe. It is the very finger of God: the conſtant impreſſion of divine power: a principle, neither innate in matter, nor intelligible by mortals.———Does it not, however, bear a conſiderable analogy to the agency of the HOLY GHOST, in the Chriſtian œconomy? Are not the gracious operations of the bleſſed Spirit, thus extenſive, thus admirable, thus various?——That Almighty Being tranſmits his gifts, through every age; and communicates his graces, to every adherent on the Redeemer. All, either of illuſtrious memory, or of beneficial tendency; in a word, "all the good "that is done upon earth, he doth it himſelf."

Strong

† See another remarkable inſtance of this kind, in the Reflections on a Flower-Garden, page 116—together with a fine obſervation, quoted in the correſponding note.

Strong in his aid, and in the power of his might, the ſaints of all times have trod vice under their feet; have triumphed over this abject world; and converſed in heaven, while they dwelt on earth. Not I, but the grace of God which was with me §, is the unanimous acknowledgment of them all.—By the ſame kindly ſuccours, the whole church is ſtill enlightened, quickened, and governed. By his benign influences the ſcales of ignorance, fall from the underſtanding; the Leproſy of evil concupiſcence is purged from the will; and the fetters, the more than adamantine fetters, of habitual iniquity, drop off from the converſation. He breathes even upon dry bones *, and they live; they are animated with faith; they pant with ardent and heavenly deſire, they exerciſe themſelves in all the duties of godlineſs.—His real, though ſecret, inſpiration diſſolves the flint in the impenitent breaſt; and binds up the ſorrows, of the broken heart: raiſes the thoughts high, in the elevations of holy hope; yet lays them low, in the humiliation of inward abaſement: ſteels the ſoul with impenetrable reſolution, and perſevering fortitude; and, at the ſame time, ſoftens it into a dove-like meekneſs, and melts it in penitential ſorrow.

When I contemplate thoſe ample and amazing ſtructures, erected in endleſs magnificence, over all the ætherial plains:—When I look upon them, as ſo many ſplendid repoſitories of light, or fruitful abodes of life:—When I remember, that, in all probability, there are orbs, vaſtly more remote, than thoſe which appear to our unaided ſight; orbs, whoſe effulgence, though travelling ever ſince the creation, is not yet arrived upon our

§ 1 Cor. xv. 10.

* See that beautiful piece of ſacred and allegorical imagery diſplayed. Ezek. xxxvii.

our coaſt ‡:—When I ſtretch my thoughts to the innumerable orders of being, which inhabit all thoſe ſpacious ſyſtems; from the loftieſt ſeraph, that ſurrounds the throne; to the puny nations, which tinge with blue the ſurface of the plum †, or mantle the ſtanding pool with green:——O! how various are the links, in this immenſe chain! How vaſt the gradations, in this univerſal ſcale of exiſtence! Yet all theſe, however vaſt and various are the work of God's hand, and are full of his preſence.

He rounded in his palm thoſe dreadfully large globes, which are pendulous in the vault of heaven. He kindled thoſe aſtoniſhingly bright fires, which fill the firmament with a flood of glory. By him they are ſuſpended in fluid æther, and can-

‡ If this conjecture (which has no leſs a perſon than the celebrated Mr. Huygens for its Author) concerning unſeen ſtars, be true: If, to this obſervation be added, what is affirmed by our ſkilful aſtronomers; that the motion of the rays of light is ſo ſurpriſingly ſwift, as to paſs through ten millions of miles in a ſingle minute—How vaſt! beyond imagination vaſt and unmeaſurable, are the ſpaces of univerſe!——While the mind is diſtended with the grand idea: or rather while ſhe is diſpatching her ableſt powers of piercing judgment, and excurſive fancy; and finds them all drop ſhort; all baffled by the amazing ſubject: Permit me to apply that beautiful exclamation, and noble remark———

———Say, proud arch,
Built with divine ambition; in diſdain
Of limit built; built in the taſte of heav'n!
Vaſt concave! Ample dome! Waſt thou deſign'd
A meet apartment for the Deity?
Not ſo: That thought alone thy ſtate impairs:
Thy lofty ſinks; and ſhallows thy profound;
And ſtraitens thy diffuſive.———

Night-Thoughts, No. IX.

† Ev'n the blue down the purple plum ſurrounds,
A living world, thy failing ſight confounds.
To him a peopled habitation ſhews,
Where millions taſte the bounty God beſtows.

See a very beautiful, ſublime, and inſtructive poem, ſtyled —Deity.

not be ſhaken: By him they diſpenſe a perpetual tide of beams, and are never exhauſted.——He formed, with inexpreſſible nicety, that exquiſitely fine collection of tubes; that unknown multiplicity of ſubtle ſprings; which organize and actuate the frame of the minuteſt inſect. He bids the crimſon current roll; the vital movements play; and aſſociates a world of wonders, even in an animated point ‡.—In all theſe, is a rich exhibition of creating power; to all theſe, are extended the ſpecial regards of preſerving goodneſs. From hence, let me learn to rely on the Providence, and to be ever ſenſible of the preſence of the ſupreme Majeſty.

To rely on his Providence —For, not one being, amidſt that inconceivable number and variety, which ſwarm through the regions of creation; is overlooked, or neglected, by the great omnipotent Cauſe of all. However inconſiderable in its character, or diminutive in its ſize, it is ſtill the production of the univerſal Maker, and belongs to the family of the Almighty Father.—What? Though inthroned

‡ There are living creatures, abundantly ſmaller than the mite. Mr. Bradley, in his Treatiſe on Gardening, mentions an inſect, which, after accurate examination, he found to be a thouſand times leſs than the leaſt viſible grain of ſand. At the ſame time declaring, that ſuch an animalcule, though quite imperceptible to the naked eye, is a bulky being; compared with others, almoſt infinitely more minute, diſcovered by Mr. Lewenhoeck.—If then we conſider the ſeveral limbs, which compoſe (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) ſuch an organized particle: The different ſprings, which actuate ſuch a ſet of limbs: The flow of ſpirits, inexpreſſibly more attenuated, which put thoſe ſprings in motion: The various fluids, that circulate: The different ſecretions, that are performed: Together with the proportionable minuteneſs of the ſolids, before they arrive at their full growth: Not to mention other more aſtoniſhing modes of diminution.—Sure, we ſhall ſee the utmoſt reaſon to acknowledge, that the adored Maker is—— MAXIMUS IN MINIMIS; greatly glorious even in his ſmalleſt works.

inthroned Archangels enjoy the ſmiles of his countenance; yet, the low inhabitants of earth, the moſt deſpicable worms that creep the ground, are not excluded from his kind providential cares. Though the manifeſtation of his perfections is vouchſafed to holy and intellectual eſſences; his ear is open to the cries of the young raven; his eye attentive to the wants, and to the welfare, of the very meaneſt births of nature.—How much leſs then are his own people diſregarded? Thoſe, for whom he has delivered his beloved Son to death, and for whom he has prepared habitations of eternal joy. They diſregarded! No: They are "kept as the apple of an eye;" the very hairs of their head are all numbered; and the fondeſt mother may forget the infant, that is "dandled upon her knees," and ſucks at her breaſt †; much ſooner than the

† Iſa. xlix. 15. "Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the Son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee."—How delicate, and very expreſſive, are the images, in this charming Scripture! How full of beauty, if beheld in a critical, how rich with conſolation, if conſidered in a believing view;——Can a woman; one of the ſofter ſex, whoſe nature is moſt impreſſible, and whoſe paſſions are remarkably tender—Can ſuch a one not barely diſregard, but intirely forget; not ſuſpend her care for a while, but utterly eraſe the very memory of—her child; her own child, not another's; a child, that was formed in her womb, and is a part of herſelf?—Her ſon; the more important, and therefore more deſirable ſpecies; to whom it peculiarly belongs, to preſerve the name, and build up the family ——Her only ſon; for the word is ſingular, and refers to a caſe, where the offſpring, not being numerous, but centered in a ſingle birth, muſt be productive of the fondeſt endearment ——Can ſhe diveſt herſelf of all concern for ſuch a child; not when he is grown up to maturity, or gone abroad from her houſe; but while he continues in an infantile ſtate, and muſt owe his whole ſafety to her kind attendance; while he lies in her boſom, reſts on her arm, and even ſucks at her breaſt?—Eſpecially if the poor innocent be racked with pain, or ſeized by

Father of everlaſting compaſſions can diſcontinue, or remit, his watchful tenderneſs to thoſe, whom he condeſcends, to call, not ſervants, only, but children.

Let this teach me alſo a more lively ſenſe of the Divine Preſence.—All the rolling worlds above; all the living atoms below; together with all the beings that intervene, betwixt theſe wide extreams, are vouchers for an ever preſent Deity. "God has not left himſelf without witneſs." There are the marks of his footſteps in every place, and the touches of his finger in every creature. "Thy name is ſo nigh, O thou all ſupporting, all informing Lord; and that do thy wondrous works declare. Thy goodneſs warms in the morning ſun, and refreſhes in the evening breeze. Thy glory ſhines in the lamps of midnight, and ſmiles in the bloſſoms of ſpring. We ſee a trace of thy incomprehenſible grandeur, in the boundleſs extent of things; and a ſketch of thy exquiſite ſkill, in thoſe almoſt evaneſcent ſparks of life, the inſect race." ——O! How ſtupid is this heart of mine, that amidſt ſuch a multitude of remembrancers, thronging on every ſide, I ſhould forget thee a ſingle moment! Grant me, Thou great I AM; Thou ſource, and ſupport, of univerſal exiſtence; O! grant me an enlightened eye, to diſcern thee in every object; and a devout heart, to adore thee on every occaſion.

Inſtead

by ſome ſevere affliction; and ſo become an object of compaſſion, as well as of love. Can ſhe hear its piercing cries; can ſhe ſee it all reſtleſs, all helpleſs under its miſery, and feel no emotions of parental pity?—Or, if one ſuch monſter of inhumanity might be found; yet, can all mothers be ſo degenerate? This, ſure, need never be feared. Much leſs need the true believer, be apprehenſive of the failure of my kindneſs. An univerſal extinction, of theſe ſtrongeſt affections of nature is a more ſuppoſeable caſe; than that I ſhould ever be unmindful of my people, or regardleſs of their intereſts.

Inſtead of living without God in the world; may I be ever with him, and ſee all things full of him ‡!

If the beautiful ſpangles, which a clear night pours on the beholder's eye: if thoſe other fires, which beam in remoter ſkies; and are diſcoverable only by, that revelation to the ſight, the teleſcope: if all thoſe bright millions are ſo many fountains of day; enriched with native and independent luſtre; illuminating planets, and enlivening ſyſtems, of their own *: O! What amazing pomp is diſcloſed, in the midnight ſcene! What unknown riches are diſſeminated through all theſe numberleſs provinces of the great Jehovah's empire!—Yet, immenſe and endleſs as they are, there's not the meaneſt ſlave, but carries incomparably greater wealth in his own boſom. The ſoul, that informs his clay,——the ſoul, that teaches him to think, and ennables him to chooſe; that qualifies him to reliſh rational pleaſure, and to breathe ſublime deſire †;—The ſoul, that is poſſeſſed of ſuch noble faculties;

‡ ————The glitt'ring ſtars,
By the deep ear of Meditation heard,
Still in their midnight watches ſing of Him.
He nods a calm. The tempeſt blows his wrath.
The thunder is his voice; and the red flaſh
His ſpeedy ſword of juſtice. At his touch
The mountains flame. He ſhakes the ſolid earth,
And rocks the nations. Nor in theſe alone,
In every common inſtance God is ſeen.
Thomson's Spring.

* Conſult with reaſon. Reaſon will reply,
Each lucid point, which glows in yonder ſky,
Informs a ſyſtem in the boundleſs ſpace,
And fills, with glory, its appointed place:
With beams unborrow'd, brightens other ſkies:
And worlds, to thee unknown, with heat and life
ſupplies. The Univerſe.

† In this reſpect, as veſted with ſuch capacities, the ſoul even of fallen man has an unqueſtionable greatneſs and dignity; is majeſtic, though in ruins.

culties; and, above all, is endued with the dreadful, the glorious capacity of being pained, or bleſſed, for ever——this ſoul ſurpaſſes in worth whatever the eye can ſee; whatever of material, the fancy can imagine. Before one ſuch intellectual being, all the moſt aſtoniſhing magnificence of unintelligent creation becomes poor and contemptible ‡. For this, Omnipotence itſelf has waked, and worked, through every age. To convince this ſoul, the fundamental laws of nature have been controuled: and the moſt amazing miracles have alarmed all the ends of the earth. To inſtruct this ſoul, the wiſdom of heaven has been transfuſed into the ſacred page; and miſſionaries have been ſent from the great King, who reſides in light unapproachable. To ſanctify this ſoul, the Almighty Comforter takes the wings of a dove; and, with a ſweet transforming influence, broods on the human heart.—And O! to redeem this ſoul from guilt; to reſcue it from hell; the heaven of heavens was bowed, and God himſelf came down to dwell in duſt.

Let me pauſe, a moment, upon this important ſubject.—What are the ſchemes, which engage the attention of eminent Stateſmen, and mighty Monarchs, compared with the grand intereſts of an immortal ſoul? The ſupport of commerce, and the ſucceſs of armies, though extremely weighty affairs; yet, if laid in the balance againſt the ſalvation of a ſoul, are lighter than the downy feather, poiſed

‡ I beg leave to tranſcribe a pertinent paſſage from that celebrated maſter of reaſon, and univerſal literature, Dr. Bentley; whom no man can be tempted to ſuſpect, either tinctured with enthuſiaſm, or warped to bigotry.—"If we conſider, ſays he, the dignity of an intelligent being, and put that in the ſcale againſt brute and inanimate matter, we may affirm, without overvaluing human nature, that the ſoul of one virtuous and religious man is of greater worth and excellency, than the ſun, and all his planets, and all the ſtars in the world." See his ſermons at Boyle's Lect. No. 8.

poiſed againſt talents of gold. To ſave a navy from ſhipwreck, or a kingdom from ſlavery, are deliverances of the moſt momentous nature, that the tranſaction of mortality can admit. But O! how they ſhrink into an inconſiderable trifle, if (their aſpect upon immortality forgot) they are ſet in competition with the delivery of a ſingle ſoul, from the anguiſh and horrors of a diſtreſſed eternity †!

Since, ſuch is the ſoul's importance; what vigilance can be too much; or rather what holy ſolicitude can be ſufficient; for the overſeers of the Saviour's flock, and the guardians of his unutterably noble charge?——Since, ſuch is the importance of the ſoul; wilt thou not, O man, be watchful for the preſervation of thy own? Shall every caſual incident awaken thy concern; every tranſitory toy command thy regard? And ſhall the welfare of thy ſoul, a work of continual occurrence; a work of endleſs conſequence; ſue, in vain, for thy ſerious care?—Thy ſoul, thy ſoul, is thy all. If this be ſecured, thou art greatly rich, and wilt be unſpeakable happy. If this be loſt, a whole world acquired will leave thee in poverty; and all its delights enjoyed will abandon thee to miſery.

I have often been charmed and awed, at the ſight of the nocturnal Heavens; even before I knew how to conſider them in their proper circumſtances of majeſty and beauty. Something like Magic has ſtruck my mind, on a tranſient and unthinking ſurvey of the ætherial vault; when tinged throughout with the pureſt azure, and decorated with innumerable ſtarry lamps. I have felt, I know not what, powerful and aggrandizing impulſe; that ſnatched me from the low intanglements of vanity, and

† Not all yon luminaries quench'd at once
Were half ſo ſad, as one benighted mind,
Which gropes for happineſs, and meets deſpair.
Night-Thoughts, No. IX.

and prompted in ardent ſigh for ſublimer objects. Methought, I heard, even from the ſilent ſpheres, a commanding call, to ſpurn the abject earth, and pant after unſeen delights.——Henceforward I hope to imbibe more copiouſly this moral emanation of the ſkies; when, in ſome ſuch manner as the preceding, they are rationally ſeen, and duly weighed. The Stars, I truſt, will teach, as well as ſhine; and help to diſpel, both nature's gloom, and my intellectual darkneſs. To ſome, they diſcharge no higher a ſervice, than that of holding a flambeau to their feet, and ſoftening the horrors of their night. To me, may they be miniſters of a ſuperior order; and act as counſellors of wiſdom, and guides to happineſs. Nor will they fail to execute this noble office, if they gently and gradually light my way, into the knowledge of their adored Maker; and point out, with their ſilver rays, my path to his beatific preſence.

I GAZE, I ponder. I ponder, I gaze; and think ineffable things.—I roll an eye of awe and admiration. Again and again I repeat my raviſhed views; and can never ſatiate my ſight, in this immenſe theatre. I ſpring my thoughts in ſpeculation, till even fancy tires upon her wing. I find wonders, ever new; wonders, more and more amazing.—Yet, after all my preſent inquiries, what a mere nothing do I know; by all my future ſearches, how little ſhall I be able to learn; of thoſe vaſtly diſtant Suns, and their circling retinue of worlds! Could I pry with Newton's piercing ſagacity, or launch into his moſt extenſive ſurveys: yet, even then, my apprehenſions would be little better, than thoſe dim and ſcanty images, which the Mole, juſt emerged from her cavern, receives on her feeble optic.—This, ſure, ſhould repreſs all immoderate thirſt, after an inſight into the ſecrets of the ſtarry ſtructures; and make me more careful to cultivate my heart. To fathom

the

the depths of the divine eſſence: or to ſcan univerſal nature, with a critical exactneſs; is an attempt, that ſets the acuteſt Philoſopher, very nearly on a level with the Idiot. Since it is almoſt, if not altogether, as impracticable by the one, as by the other.

Be it, then, my chief ſtudy, not to purſue, what is abſolutely unattainable; but rather to ſeek, what is obvious to find; eaſy to be acquired; and of ineſtimable advantage, when poſſeſſed. O! let me ſeek that charity, which edifieth*; that faith, which purifieth. Love, humble love, and not conceited ſcience, keeps the door of Heaven. Faith, a child-like faith in Jesus; and not the haughty ſelf-ſufficient ſpirit, which ſcorns to be ignorant of any thing; preſents a key † to thoſe abodes of bliſs.——This preſent ſtate is the ſcene deſtined to the exerciſe of devotion; the inviſible world is the place appointed for the enjoyment of knowledge ‡. There, the dawn of our infantile minds, will be advanced to the maturity of perfect day; or rather, there our midnight ſhades will be brightened into all the luſtre

* 1 Cor. viii. 1. I need not inform my reader, that in this text; in that admirable chapter 1 Cor. xiii. and in various other paſſages of ſcripture; the word Charity is by no means to be confined, to the particular act of alms-giving, or external beneficence. It is of a much more exalted and extenſive nature. It ſignifies that noble and divine grace, which warms the ſoul with a ſupreme love, to God; and inlarges it with a diſintereſted affection, for men. Which renders it the reigning care of the life, and chief delight of the heart, to promote the glory of the one, and the happineſs of the other.——This, this is that charity, of which ſo many excellent things are every where ſpoken: which can be never too highly extolled, or too earneſtly coveted, ſince it is the image of God, and the very ſpirit of heaven.

† By Milton beautifully ſtiled,

——The golden key,
That opes the palace of eternity.

Milt. Comus.

‡ 1 Cor. xii. 12.

of noon. There the ſouls that come from the ſchool of faith, and bring with them the principles of Love, will dwell in light itſelf; will be obſcured with no darkneſs at all; will know even as they are known.—Such an acquaintance, therefore do I deſire to form, and to carry on ſuch correſpondence, with the heavenly bodies; as may ſhed a benign influence on the ſeeds of grace, implanted in my breaſt. Let the exalted tracts of the firmament ſink my ſoul into deep humiliation. Let thoſe eternal fires kindle in my heart an adoring gratitude, to their almighty ſovereign. Let yonder ponderous and enormous globes, which reſt on his ſupporting arm teach me an unſhaken affiance, in their incarnate Maker. And I ſhall be, if not wiſe as the Aſtronomical Adept, yet WISE UNTO SALVATION.

HAVING now walked, and worſhipped, in this univerſal temple, that is arched with ſkies emblazed with the ſtars; and extended even to immenſity—— Having caſt an eye, like the inraptured Patriarch *; an eye of reaſon and devotion, through the magnificent ſcene: with the one, having, diſcovered an infinitude of worlds; and with the other, met the Deity in every view—Having beheld, as Moſes in the flaming buſh, a glimpſe of JEHOVAH's excellencies reflected from the planets, and ſtreaming from myriads of celeſtial luminaries.——Having read various leſſons, in that ſtupendous book of wiſdom, where unmeaſurable ſheets of azure compoſe the page; and orbs of radiance write, in everlaſting characters, a comment on our Creed—What remains, but that I cloſe the midnight ſolemnity, as our LORD concluded his grand ſacramental inſtitution, with the ſong of praiſe?—And behold a hymn, ſuited to the ſublime occaſion; indited by † inſpiration itſelf; transferred into our language, by ‡ one of

* Gen. xv. 5. † Pſal. xix.

‡ Addiſon, Spect. Vol. VI. No. 465.

of the higheſt and happieſt efforts of human ingenuity?

The ſpacious firmament on high,
With all the blue æthereal ſky,
And ſpangled Heav'ns, a ſhining frame,
Their great Original proclaim:
Th' unweary'd Sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's pow'r diſplay,
And publiſhes, to ev'ry land,
The work of an Almighty hand.

Soon as the ev'ning ſhades prevail,
The Moon takes up the wond'rous tale,
And nightly to the liſt'ning earth
Repeats the ſtory of her birth:
While all the Stars, that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And ſpread the truth from pole to pole.
What though, in ſolemn ſilence, all
Move round the dark terreſtrial ball?
What though, nor real voice nor ſound
Amid their radiant orbs be found?
In Reaſon's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever ſinging, as they ſhine,
"*The hand that made Us is divine.*"

FINIS.